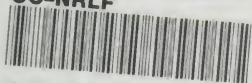
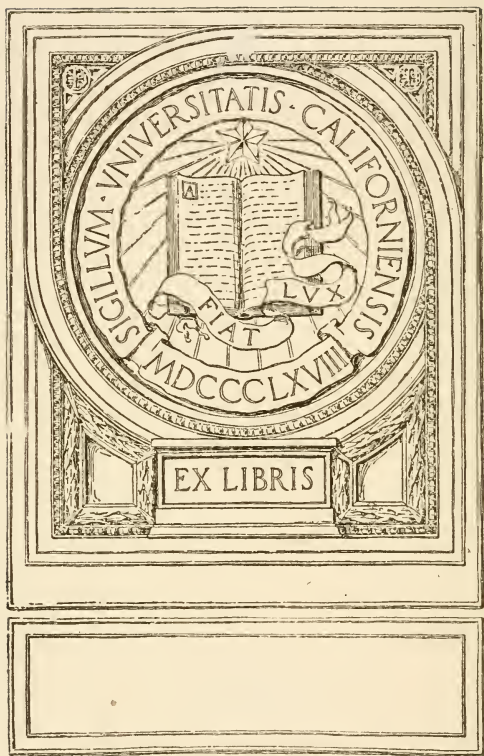


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OUR FIRST TEN THOUSAND



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THREE AMERICANS

The author and two Canadians at the base of the
Vendome Column in February

OUR FIRST TEN THOUSAND

BY

SERGEANT
CHESTER WALTON JENKS

ILLUSTRATED FROM PHOTOGRAPHS
BY THE AUTHOR



BOSTON
THE FOUR SEAS COMPANY
1919

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TO THOSE WHOSE FAITHFUL LETTERS
HAVE BROUGHT RENEWED COURAGE AND HAVE
MADE TEN DARK MONTHS ENDURABLE,
I GRATEFULLY DEDICATE THESE
PAGES

FOREWORD

It is the custom for a man to tell the public why he presumes to address them, but perhaps in the present crisis a real 'war book' need not apologize for itself. Let me say simply that I had the honor and privilege, as a member of General Pershing's Headquarters Company, to be among the first ten thousand American soldiers on French soil, but was disabled before the Americans went into active engagement with the enemy. With no pretence to literary excellence or to logical order I have written out my experiences, closely following my diary, which I kept religiously. For obvious reasons I have passed very quickly over the horrors of the trenches, for it is not the object of this little volume to brutalize its readers with heart-rending details of the fearful slaughter that is going on. It is enough to know that it exists: we are supplied with too many ghastly details by the daily newspapers. I have tried to picture France as I saw her after her first three years of fighting, and especially to describe her reception of our troops and our first months of preparation in her hospitable

country. For the rest, the books written by the brave men who have actually defended us with their lives from the inroads of the bestial Hun have said the last word. I lament my temporary physical disability, and hope that it will not be many months before I am back again with the boys.

Paris, March 11, 1918.

C. W. J.

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OUR FIRST TEN THOUSAND

OUR FIRST TEN THOUSAND

CHAPTER I.

CROSSING THE ATLANTIC

IT was a warm day in July, 1917, before the era of ship camouflage; no fantastic shapes were painted on the sides of our war transport, no waves, no dark blue with splotches of green, or light blue with splotches of yellow. The boat was all gray, battleship gray, and she seemed a mighty thing as she lay tied up to one of the huge piers in the Hudson River, waiting to take on the great gun carriages, the stacks of barbed wire for entanglement work in the trenches, and all the other formidable implements of war which were piled high on the dock. She was an English liner, with a civilian crew.

In our party were fifty sergeant clerks of the quartermaster department of the army. Sitting watchfully on our barrack bags we awaited orders, then filed up the gangplank and followed the leader down two flights of stairs to a compartment fitted with bunks three tiers high, each consisting of an iron framework to which oblong strips of canvas the length of a man of average height were suspended with ropes. Between were narrow passageways which allowed

scarcely room to turn round, and save that it had been recently painted, the whole place was redolent of the steerage. Nearly suffocated by the small size of the room and its intense heat, we were not long in getting on deck, especially as we did not want to miss anything that was going on. Here we watched huge derricks lifting the cargo into the hold, and an interminable line of khaki-clad engineers, with barrack-bags on their backs, crawling like ants up the gangplank all day long. At sunset we went below to sleep, or rather to lie awake; for the compartment was a furnace.

The next day was very hot, and we had but one kind of clothing—the winter variety. Several first-class passengers, including perhaps a half-dozen women came aboard this morning. We had ourselves tried to obtain first-class passage by paying the difference in rate, but were refused because, being non-commissioned officers we were subject to army regulations in regard to steamship accommodations. Bent on improving our opportunities, however, my friend Marshall and I, seeing a man cross the gangplank with two ice-cold bottles of ginger ale, succeeded with much difficulty in buying them from him. When we asked if he could get us something to eat, he replied that he could not, but that if we were

hungry he would 'put us in right with a man who would treat us white.' We followed him to the bow of the ship and down a hatchway, where we received a formal introduction to "The Good Skin," or "Cap", as he was universally called, a typical tar of perhaps sixty years, who held undisputed sway over the tackle, rope, and anchors, but who was at that moment acting as host to a circle of stevedores, who were enjoying a light repast. Taking us aside, he assured us that as soon as we were under way and he was no longer bothered with the stevedores, he would do his utmost for our appetites and for our general comfort. This was said with such a broad smile and twinkling of the eye that we felt at home with him immediately.

Finding that passes were issued to leave the ship from ten till one o'clock, we were not slow to seize the opportunity to complete our shopping, which had been hasty and unfinished and quite inadequate, for we had had but two days' notice that we were to leave for overseas. About three o'clock a blast of the whistle announced that the big gray ship was ready to slip away. "Stop that crying, lady," some one shouted, as a woman on the dock burst into tears; "that's not allowed"; and just then, at the eleventh hour and

fifty-ninth minute, as the gangplank was being raised, who should come tearing down but Bill Williams, an old college roommate, with several packages of food, which he threw over the rail and which later proved a godsend to us. Another instant, and the gap between us and the dock became wider as we swung round into the river; then with tugs puffing alongside, the huge liner, loaded to capacity with cargo—motor trucks, shells, food, soldiers, and, as we learned later, several million dollars' worth of gold, in grain sacks—glided down past the Battery amid the whistling of ferry-boats and cheers and the waving of hands and handkerchiefs from every side. One by one the coast-patrol boats, battle-ships, and cruisers at anchor in the harbor fell behind, soldiers greeting sailors as we passed. A cheer went up from us as we sighted an American destroyer and saw a hydroplane glide into the air. Presently the submarine dragnet was passed and the tall buildings of the New York skyline began to lose themselves in the haze. The statue of Liberty became a speck, the boys astride booms and on the rigging looking hard at it with a smile but through tear-dimmed eyes. Then with even the lightship left behind, we resolutely turned our faces eastward toward France and the Great Un-



GOOD-BYE, STATUE OF LIBERTY

known, and at sunset there was nothing but water everywhere.

Too tired and sleepy to be disturbed by rumors of betting in Wall Street with odds fifteen to one that we were liable to be submarined, several of us took our blankets up on the cool deck and spread them under the motor trucks, with which all the decks were lined—not a bad place to sleep, though rather damp. Early the next morning we found Cap waiting for us in his little room, along each side of which ran a wooden bench, one of them spread with a table cover, oatmeal, cream, eggs, toast, coffee, and orange marmalade—a pretty sure sign that Cap was going to prove a friend in need. Confidences being now in order, we learned—what we had already guessed—that Cap was a friend of the first cabin cook; that he ran away from home when a boy and had followed the sea all his life; that he was married and had five daughters, all of them with college education and one of them the wife of a member of Parliament; that one of his two sons had been killed with the first hundred thousand and the other was at home wounded; that through the kindness of a world-famous railroad magnate with whom he used to fire on one of our western railroads he owned a house in Liverpool “equal

to that of the captain of the ship himself"; and last, but by no means least, that he might have retired long ago, but the sea was in his blood. Cap has a rather half-witted assistant, called George, who drinks tea and then drinks some more, but is otherwise perfectly harmless. That night four mattresses spread in the "forepeak" made us certain that Cap intended to take good care of us.

Before morning we had picked up four other ships which were to accompany us. As the days passed we found the voyage entirely different from other trips we had made across the Atlantic. There was no talking with a girl here, with children playing quoits there, or with an old lady somewhere else; no promenading the deck, lined with steamer-chairs, in company with a healthy American girl for the development of the appetite; no going down to the dining-room resplendent in white table linen and china and attentive waiters, to an appetizing breakfast; no sauntering up on deck again for a game or two of shuffleboard, to while away the time till, in an hour or two, the stewards should come with cups of steaming broth and crackers, to be followed presently by a lunch that you might select from a menu a foot long in fine print. The day did not

close with a dance, or with a quiet hour of dreaming with a dreamy companion to the rhythmic swish of the scintillating waves and the rhythmic melody of the orchestra below. All such things seemed to belong to a previous state of existence.

Our routine now was to be up at six o'clock—though for that matter most of us were up a greater part of the time, day and night—with breakfast at seven. At night we reported on deck for calisthenic exercises—which meant running and jumping for an hour to keep us in good physical condition—and after that we were free to do what we liked. But after two or three days, when the novelty of the sea had worn away, everyone was looking for some new diversion. Sitting on the deck on our blankets—the city man from the East, the ranchman from Montana, the farmer from the Dakotas, and the regular soldier from “San Antone”—we read, we talked, or watched the waves hoping to see a periscope—the monotonous waves, disliked by one man because they are all alike, and by another because they made him sick.

On Sunday we had church service aft. Divine service on board a war transport is a solemn thing, even though the deck is strewn with rope,

with the fellows perched on the rail and the chaplain standing on a hatchway. To men tossed about on one of God's greatest works, with a ruthless enemy skulking somewhere underneath, the homely pulpit is a real altar where they feel a real Presence. As we began to poke our prow deeper and deeper into the submarine zone where the clandestine assassins of the Hohenzollerns were lurking to destroy us if possible, we sung "Onward, Christian Soldiers" and songs for safety at sea with much more feeling and deeper significance than I had ever heard them before or ever expect to hear them again.

I shall never forget the service on board the transport during the return trip. On Good Friday night we all felt sure that we were well out of the war zone; for we knew it to be the policy of the submarine to keep as near the coast of England and France as possible, and especially just outside the harbors where the transports must converge, since their chances of success are greater there. Saturday afternoon a heavy storm blew up, and by six o'clock in the evening our ship—which was formerly an old German liner and now top-heavy by reason of having no cargo—began to roll and pitch terribly. At nine o'clock, when I tried to go on deck, the sea was

twice as high as the ship itself, an awe-inspiring sight which I hope never again to experience. With difficulty I clung to the hatchway and was drenched to the skin. Three hours later six feet of water was reported in the bilge, and nobody knew whence it came. We were in mid-Atlantic. The ship's officers were rushing about, talking together in groups and acting so strangely that it was clear conditions were unusual and, from what I could make out, not pleasant. We who were not already out of our bunks were thrown out, and everything was sliding about the deck. Some of the electric lights were turned on, and at midnight a group of us were in the electrician's room watching, by means of a sextant arrangement, the fearful roll of the ship. Thirty-five degrees to one side, then the grating of the propeller! thirty-two on the other side and another grating of the propeller! This was the only means of steering so as to keep the ship right side up. Now forty-one degrees, and my heart was in my mouth! Had she rolled five degrees more, this book would never have been written. Easter Sunday, when the storm had abated, was to us almost a resurrection morning, for every man aboard thanked God as he had never thanked Him before.

The first day or two out we were drilled two or three times a day in the use of life-boats. Five short blasts of the whistle mean submarines or life-boat drill, whereupon everyone clambers up the ladder and stands in front of the lifeboat to which he is assigned. Each man knows his exact position and must keep it: the officers and "non-coms", who carry revolvers, are ordered to shoot any man who moves from his place or causes any disturbance which may lead to panic. Then the call, "Abandon ship," is awaited. When it sounds the boats are lowered by the ship's crew, who have their own stations; and then comes the sliding down the ropes. Once before our convoy arrived, a submarine took two shots at us; but as our maximum speed was eighteen knots an hour, we easily ran away from it.

When we entered the war zone we were ordered to sleep on deck fully dressed with life-preservers for pillows, in order to avoid the panic that would be sure to ensue below in case of a night attack, but it was always so cold and damp on deck that a few of us would sneak down past the sentry to Cap's room. One night as we four lay there covered with blankets a sentry approached. "What are you doing prowling round here?" growled our watchful old friend.

"We've been on watch for three hours; can't you let the ship's crew have a little rest?" Thereupon the sentry withdrew, leaving Cap chuckling over the success of his joke. But our "white" man served us another good turn which meant even more to us. By arrangement with the first-cabin steward he made it possible for us each to take a bath every day, a blessing which we might have appreciated even more had we realized the long stretches of days ahead when weekly baths would be things unknown.

Night and day we were of course on our guard against submarines. On each side of the ship there were several lookout posts, in each of which, as well as in that in the crow's nest at the masthead, a man was stationed all the time to scan, through powerful glasses, every inch of water in a certain segment of the sea. The lookouts were relieved every few hours. There were of course no lights at night; even for the scratching a match, which might endanger the lives of all on board, there was a severe penalty. Consequently smoking was forbidden after seven o'clock, though as a matter of fact no one could possibly have disobeyed this order after the first three or four days on the water except souls who had laid in a goodly store of 'smokes.' We were

also forbidden to throw anything overboard, for the flotsam of a fleet leaves a trail discernible by a neighboring submarine.

Another expedient to which we were driven was the necessity of zigzagging, or tacking, continually. When a ship maintains her ordinary speed and direction, it is of course easy enough by means of the proper instruments, to determine where she will be in a certain number of minutes. A submarine, sighting her a certain distance away and noting her direction and speed, can submerge and head directly for the spot where she will be at a given time. In order to foil the enemy, therefore, a ship zigzags; that is to say she goes in a certain direction for five minutes, then changes her course and heads in another direction. She will, for instance, go northeast at a certain speed for a certain number of minutes, then southeast at the same or a different speed for the same or a different number of minutes.

In this way we wormed ourselves cautiously along, till one evening at dusk we spied a light on the horizon. It was so long since we had seen a light that we hardly realized that it was one. Another light, then another, until we counted seven, and in less than twenty minutes seven British submarine destroyers were with

us. Swift, rakish four-stackers, they circled round us like the "interference" of a football team, fending off all insidious opponents and reconnoitering in the direction of any object that might come into view on the horizon. With them at our side, and our sister ships—a comforting presence—never far away even if sometimes out of sight, we sailed on towards England with a pleasant sense of security that was enhanced by the recollection of our narrow escape from a U-boat while we were unprotected.

We did not sleep after passing Fastnet. We preferred to listen to Cap's yarns in the forepeak, where he made an interesting picture seated on his sea-chest in the midst of his 'gear', relighting his pipe (which kept going out continually), tying all sorts of sailors' knots, and stopping to tell us the names of all the lighthouses and to point out the promontories buffeted by the broken waves. At last came a day in the Irish Sea, with sun, then rain, then sun again, and I knew I was in England! In the fog at evening we reached the bar outside the harbor of Liverpool; but, too late for the tide, we had to be satisfied with turning circles up and down the coast until sunrise, when, bidding Cap farewell, we entered the harbor.

CHAPTER II.

GUESTS OF THE ENGLISH.

IT seemed good to be really "over there" at last, and everything looked interesting to us. Ferry-boats, passing us on our way up the harbor, blew short blasts of the whistle by way of greeting and the women passengers waved their handkerchiefs. Doubtless the men would have done the same had there been any, but even on these boats the absence of men of any kind attracted my attention. The Landing Stage, alive with people, with the uniform of an English officer showing here and there among them, drew nearer and nearer; but, since two of the other ships in our convoy deposited their cargo first, it was late in the afternoon before we pulled alongside. Barrack-bags on our backs, we lined up on deck and, as we reached the ladder of descent, every man received a ham sandwich with the compliments of the White Star Line, wrapped in a newspaper! This dainty portion was to serve as lunch until we could get something to eat somewhere else. Into an empty train we jammed, only to be held up for an hour in the freight yards of Liverpool. The time

passed quickly enough, however, for we amused ourselves by throwing pennies at the scores of English kiddies who came up to the car windows.

In due time the train sped on through the pleasant English countryside, which I so dearly love. As the other seven men in my compartment had not been "across" before, they were struck with the well-trimmed hedges, the greenness of the grass, which shone with almost metallic intensity, the abundance of flowers and of vegetable gardens, the neatness and order of everything, and the lack of wooden houses. These, I remembered distinctly, were the very things which had impressed me when I first visited England; and I was now certain that they marked real differences between England and America, and inwardly complimented myself upon my discernment. On we went, now swirling past farmhouses, in the back yards of which stood women with arms akimbo, now flashing past the station of a little town, the streets lined with blocks of red and yellow brick houses, all alike, where lived the employees of the manufacturing plant beside the track, with its tall chimney pouring forth a stream of black smoke.

Presently the houses appeared to be closer together, and from the car window we could see

the overhanging smoke that announced a large city. A line of toy freight cars filled with coal—Birmingham! Intense furnace of production before the war and infinitely more red-hot now, Birmingham, situated as it is in the very center of the country, seems to be the heart of England itself, a heart whose gigantic palpitation in the shape of munition works throws out the thousands of shells indispensable to victory. The ladies of the city served us with tea and sandwiches on the station platform, and a trainload of Canadian soldiers returning to the front after a "Blighty" joined us there. I was glad enough to be able to buy a newspaper to learn what was happening in the world, for I had not seen one in three weeks.

From Birmingham to Southampton the way was long and tiresome. When the train stopped at Oxford the thought occurred to me that but for the war I should probably have been there then as a student, and I reflected with a good deal of seriousness how little I supposed when I was there four short years ago, that I should be passing through Oxford now as an American soldier—such unbelievable changes time works! Once, at 11 o'clock, the train stopped long enough for us to notice a flashing in the sky, which we

learned in the morning was incident to a Zeppelin raid on London; and at about one o'clock in the morning it pulled us into Southampton in the midst of a pouring rain. Our raincoats were of course in our barrack-bags in the baggage car, but after a tumultuous "raid" each man found his own and we started out into the black night—and it was black! Stumbling along, now over ties along the railroad and now even on smooth asphalt pavements, with not a light visible anywhere for fear of an air-raid, our haversacks on our backs, and, after an hour's walk, all of us more than half asleep, we finally somehow arrived somewhere. I roused myself sufficiently to eat part of another ham sandwich and drink a cup of tea; then spread my blankets on the floor and taking off my shoes, I knew nothing till morning.

On a dark and rainy night Southampton looks very much like any other place on the same kind of a night. The next day, however, which was beautifully clear and bright, showed us we were in one of the rest camps that exist all over England, to which soldiers are brought for refreshment after a certain length of time in the trenches and to which convalescents are sent before they go back to France. The camp consists of about

forty wood and stone barrack-buildings, symmetrically arranged in a delightfully verdant country. We found soldiers everywhere, and it was not long before Sammie and Tommie were the best of friends. The English-speaking cousins had met, had grasped each other's hand, had each recognized a real man when he saw one. "I'll bet you a pound," declared one of two voices that I happened to overhear arguing some point; "I'll raise you a ton," answered the other voice. There were men from the trenches here with fresh wounds to show and souvenirs to sell—German buttons, rings, belts, shells, and all kinds of Boche wearing apparel, which was soon in possession of the Americans. In a Y. M. C. A. hut with a large welcome sign over the door we found a piano, crackers to eat, ginger pop and hot chocolate to drink, and an opportunity to write letters. After the midday mess of beef, war bread, and tea, we strolled over to the common and indulged in a game of handball with some little boys and in conversation with larger girls, who proved to be munition workers. Two soldiers bandaged from head to foot and wearing the light blue hospital uniform were seated on a bench with a nurse, an American girl from New York City. One of them, who had been

wounded four times, proudly showed us his Victoria Cross.

Like Birmingham, Southampton is alive with munition factories. Workmen and workwomen have flocked here by the thousands, till in the suburbs whole new towns have sprung up extending into the surrounding country. A network of organizations surrounds the factories, designed for the well-being of the workmen, and in particular for that of the munition girls, who have responded with much enthusiasm to the call of their country. I have seen the girls at work, almost hidden under their white or blue uniforms, their hair imprisoned in caps of the same color which allow only a stray lock to appear here and there. I have lunched with them and their male co-workers in their canteens, which have been created since the war began, and for the most part by the great women's societies—large, bright, clean rooms with glass dishes on tables of immaculate wood covered with green plants, where behind counters of shining porcelain and copper, young women serve good sized portions, such as a large piece of meat and two vegetables for five pence, or pudding, tarts, or marmalade for a penny and a half. I have visited the rest-rooms and the hospitals. I have talked with the welfare

workers (named by the minister of munitions), educated, well-qualified women, most of them with previous experience in social work, who form a natural bridge between the employer and the employees, listening to the grievances of the latter and watching over their physical and moral health with great tact and with a large degree of success. Evidently nothing that concerns the good of the workers has been left to chance.

In the evening we took a tram and went to town, under the guidance of a girl-conductor who could mount the spiral stairs at the rear with more agility than many a Fifth Avenue bus man. An elderly gentleman who sat on the seat with me and started conversation gave me valuable information, without which I would have missed seeing the art gallery, the "Titanic" monument, and the Royal Pier. To one welcome resort, however, we needed no guide; for in front of a large and well equipped club stood a typical English hotel proprietor, who stopped every American soldier and invited him to come inside, where there were pool tables, a card room, and all the equipment of a modern club. This was hospitality indeed, for here we enjoyed a bath and had something to eat.

Eight o'clock found us on the Royal Pier,

where for sixpence we might dance. We preferred to be onlookers, however. If the dances had been of the old English morris variety I might have attempted them, but those that everyone seemed to be dancing were so fantastic that they looked impossible. We met here several English soldiers from the camp, who entertained us with trench stories.

Southampton is a quaint old town, with its crooked streets of two-story stores and houses combined. In one of the streets we noticed an "Economy Shop", in the windows of which were printed cards giving recipes for cooking foods in such ways as to produce the highest nutritive value for the least expenditure of ingredients and money, while within were women ready to give advice and explain all questions concerning the choice and cooking of meals. Not only is the public effort put forth by the English government in this and all other lines gigantic and splendid, for the purpose of every individual to "do his bit" is noticeable everywhere. Without protest or criticism, accepting with a patient good-humor the unceasing sacrifices which war imposes, the whole English people have but a single thought and a single aim—victory.

The next day we were to cross the Channel.

After a lunch of war bread and tea, which form the major part of every meal in England, we marched to the pier, where we found many English and Scotch soldiers going our way and other Englishmen bound for Mesopotamia. The picture presented by the throng was one that I had been familiar with in movies and magazines for three years; but now it was real, it was alive, a living mass of khaki, of guns and packs, of Scotch plaid kilts, and of the queer straw-colored helmets worn by those who go to Mesopotamia. Everything looked so warlike, so strange, so inhuman, and so terrible—and we were a part of it all!

After our luggage had been stowed away on board the "Archimedes"—a cattle boat that looked none too seaworthy, we were packed in ourselves, life-belts were adjusted, and at five o'clock we were moving. There were about two hundred Scotchmen with us, great, sturdy, large-framed fellows, whose kilts seemed a mockery to men unaccustomed to seeing them. One had a bagpipe and insisted on playing upon it continually. Besides the five hundred men aboard there were as many as two hundred horses, a cargo, we were told, of more military value than the cargo of men—of so little account is the in-

dividual in this prodigious war! Although at nine o'clock, when we passed the Isle of Wight, it was still daylight, everyone was ordered below, and into a space only thirty or forty feet square, five hundred of us, Americans, English and Scotch, with our baggage! We were so crowded we could not even stand; we had to lie three deep. Somebody was on my legs, and my head was on somebody else. The air was so unbearable that as soon as things became fairly quiet and the guard had passed, those of us who were fortunate enough to be near the stairway climbed above, crawled over we knew not what in the darkness, and when we reached purer air lay down on something, we cared little what. But it was impossible to sleep; and as if that were not enough, about midnight the guard came along with a flashlight and, seeing us, unceremoniously ordered us down again into the stifling hole we had left. Since he refused to listen to argument we resorted to another means which nearly always works: we produced a ten-shilling note, with the result that he led us to a dark corner in the horse stalls, gave us some hay, and left us, exhausted, to fall asleep despite the restless pawing of the horses beside us.

When dawn broke we found ourselves at an-

chor in Le Havre, with the sun rising over the hills and reflecting itself in panes of glass here and there and in every polished surface on the numerous ships in the harbor. The air was clear, there was no wind, and the stillness of everything breathed peace. The quaint little houses with red-tiled roofs which studded the hillside reassured me that I was in France. In the very rock were doors of human dwellings.

The road to the barracks lay along the water's edge for a long distance, then turned up to a street so crowded with motor trucks and oxen-drawn vehicles that progress was difficult. There was all the more time, however, to notice the quaint French signs over the stores, and the old familiar "*Défense d'afficher*" and "*Défense d'entrer*", which seemed to make me feel less a stranger in a foreign country than a long-absent traveler returning to his native land. The mélange of the old and the new was everywhere salient: the wine wagons and the bullock carts, not to be hurried by the impatient whir of the motor behind them; the sunburnt women and children standing in doorways watching truck-loads of war necessities rattle over the narrow cobble-paved streets of their little town; the detachment of twentieth-century American soldiers

marching stolidly past the dilapidated glories of the Renaissance.

As we were among the first ten thousand over seas and had few resources of our own, we were necessarily guests of the English, who quartered us in a rest camp very similar to the one in Southampton, room having incidentally been made for us by the departure, that morning, of a large body of English troops for the front. In the evening some of us secured passes and walked about the town, which, like all other French sea-ports, is extremely dirty, full of little shacks which would seem to be uninhabitable were it not for a certain something in the character of the French people which somehow transforms them and makes them picturesque. A tiny wine shop, almost hidden behind a clump of trees, disclosed to us a group of French *blessés* seated at a table on a little terrace and being served by two young girls. From within came the sounds of a violin, and at our approach the whole establishment appeared at the door—a huge man wearing a blue apron, whose body overlapped in all directions the broken rocking-chair that he later acquired, and an old woman devoid of all but one tooth, which protruded disgustingly from a pinched mouth in a face spiderwebbed with wrinkles. When I took

up the violin and played the Marseillaise, broad grins spread over the faces of the old man and woman and had not disappeared when we started down the road to a mixed chorus of "Bonsoir, messieurs." We met two gendarmes on bicycles who stopped and saluted and bowed and smiled in a way that made us certain that we were in a country of hospitality and among people who welcomed us.

Taps scudded at nine o'clock, and we turned into a long, low shack where there were four hundred bunks, a hundred in a line, two deep, on each side. The English occupied one side, we the other. Pretty soon some one on our side started a popular song, which the English applauded and reciprocated with "Pack Up Your Troubles In Your Old Kit Bag"; then we sang another, and they followed with "Tipperary." So it went on, pleasantly enough, till the peculiarity of the English accent, especially in the songs, provoked a feeling among some of our boys (who seemed never to have seen an Englishman before) that this particular bunch of Tommies was particularly "sissified," and in a few minutes a large proportion of the Americans assumed the attitude of a Sunday street-corner gang of hoodlums who throw stones or snowballs at Little

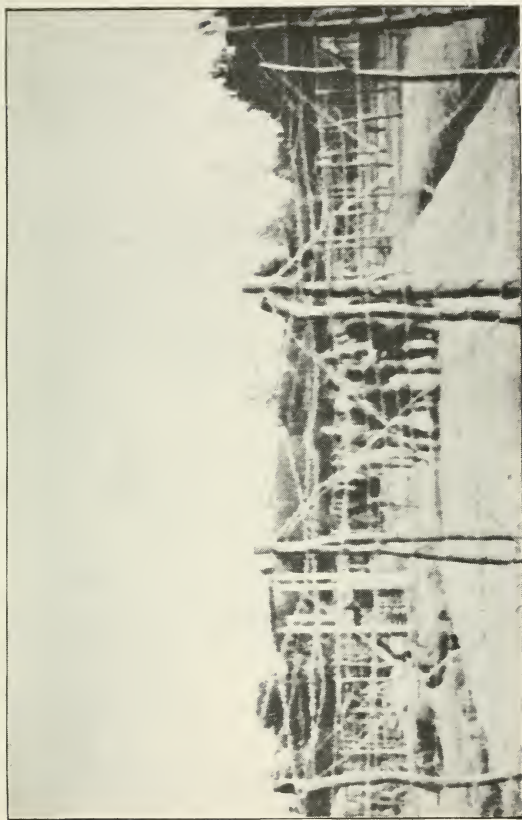
Lord Fauntleroy on his way to church. A pitched battle seemed imminent; but some of the more conservative of our men, by means of hisses and entreaties succeeded in heading it off.

The next morning we visited one of the German prison camps, of which there are many in France and England. Usually, as in this case, they are large rectangular areas fenced in with wire, the prisoners passing in and out of them through the streets of the town in bodies of from twenty to a hundred under two or three armed guards. Large, blue-eyed, fair-haired, stockily-built fellows for the most part, they work on buildings and repair roads, receiving each about two cents a day, with clothing and food. Their ignorance is astonishing. When told that we were Americans, they laughed and insisted that we were English dressed up as Americans in order to fool them; Americans, they argued, must come across the seas, and that they could not do on account of German submarines.

After our usual repast of tea, jam, hardtack, and canned beef, we packed up and marched to the station to entrain for Paris. At Foucart, where the train was held up from seven in the evening until two o'clock in the morning on account of a wreck, we all got out and made a rush

up the bank to three farm houses, the inmates of which immediately produced the contents of their wine-cellar. And what cellars they must have! There was wine without end. The first half-dozen men received it free, but when the hospitable French hosts found that there was a whole army to be supplied they made a nominal charge. This was the first time the boys realized what they were up against in the matter of language; but, using their hands to good purpose and profiting by the assistance of the natives, who are ever ready to aid and are patient to the nth power, they made themselves understood very creditably.

Farther down the road, at an inn to which I had been directed, we found two French soldiers 'en permission,' a civilian, and two women in addition to the proprietress, none of whom had ever seen an American soldier. "Américans!" they gasped when they discovered our identity; and then came a stream of questions: whence did we come? whither were we going? how many of us were there? and, lastly, but most eagerly, how long was the war going to last? On a huge round table was the dark war bread baked in enormous rings, with fresh butter, cheese, veal, and all kinds of wines. I was in the midst of a cheese



GERMAN PRISONERS

sandwich, when, hearing the whistle, I hastily dropped a five-franc note on the table and departed quite unceremoniously, only to find our train standing motionless where I had left it and an ambulance train with wounded men from the front and some empty freight cars swirling past. This must have been a red-letter night for the inhabitants of the little village, who were listening to our songs at two o'clock in the morning, when we finally started again on our way. With the usual number of eight crowded into a lightless compartment, we met with our usual success in trying to sleep with our heads on our neighbors' shoulders. For my part, I was glad to see the dawn break on Rouen, where the train made a short stop.

The sun was bright and the day warm. The flat country, extending as far as the eye could see, was all cultivated; herds of cows were grazing lazily, and peasant women with handkerchiefs tied over their heads were working in gardens or pitching hay. Here and there was a windmill. We crossed a long bridge; then the railroad tracks became more numerous; suburban trains appeared, taking their cargo to the metropolis; lines of empty cars with queer top-compartments on sidings were being swept and cleaned, and even

the brass of the engines polished, by women and girls. We rounded a curve. Looking out of the window, with a thrill I saw the familiar Eiffel Tower, under the shade of which I had spent so many happy weeks. I could hardly believe my senses—Paris!

CHAPTER III.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF PARIS.

INSTEAD of being met at the Gare du Nord by a liveried porter with a gold hat cord from the Ritz or the Meurice and being packed into an omnibus with the baggage stacked out of the way on top, we were met by two French officers with gold hatcords and were packed into five large motor trucks with our baggage under foot. Through the Boulevard de Magenta and the Place de la République we were driven, people stopping in the streets to greet us and waving their hands to us from their seats at sidewalk tables in front of cafés. The column at the Bastille loomed just in front of us, but we turned into a side street and I was lost!

Our destination was the "caserne de Reuilly," a barracks used by Napoleon. All French barracks are built in the same manner, and this one was no exception. There were three long, four-story buildings of cement on three sides of a hollow square, which was used as a drill ground. On the fourth side, which ran along the street, was a stone wall ten or twelve feet high, in the centre of which was an iron gateway. In the rear of

the large middle building, and extending ad finitum according to necessity, were the mess-halls and other buildings necessary to camp house-keeping.

We carried our bags up three flights of stairs and entered a long room lined on each side with cots. This was to be our home. It was lunch time, however, and down we went again promptly, but with some misgiving, to a mess consisting principally of a plate so thickly covered with cold grease that you could easily write your name on it, into which was poured hot soup. Black bread, potatoes and cold coffee completed the menu, which we supplemented, in the course of an afternoon ramble, at a canteen where we found sweet chocolate on sale, with wines and two or three kinds of fruit. After another heart-rending meal at six o'clock we sought comfort upstairs, only to find our cots occupied by at least two kinds of visitors, whom we left in possession while we picked up our blankets and coats and fled to the courtyard, with its bright moonlight and cool breeze; for if the days in Paris are warm in summer, the nights are usually cool. Hardly were we sound asleep, however, when we were roused about midnight by a flashing of lights in the sky and a whirl of motors, which meant noth-

ing more exciting than that the French patrols were up on guard for a possible raid. Disappointed, we turned over and things again became quiet.

Morning came, and with it the first mail from home, as many as seven blessed letters for me! No wonder that when, later in the day, the other fellows went in groups of two, three, and four to enjoy the freedom of the city till ten o'clock, I preferred to wander off alone. But speaking of letters, how annoying it was not to have any longer a free pen unfettered by the critical eye of the censor! How many times I wanted to write home the nature of my work and the beginnings of things from a business standpoint, but dared not! Besides, you do not care to have certain little personal incidents read by the young lieutenant at the other end of the room who is the censor for your department and knows you. The letters from our boys in the trenches are so short and so elusive in their brave cheeriness that we are not satisfied; we want more of the details; we are prone to imagine and misjudge. About war conditions they obviously cannot be allowed to say very much, and the little personalities so dear to the folks at home a fellow often dislikes to write because he knows the man who will cen-

sor his letter and who will probably read every word of it. And so the days of anguish go by, the girl thinking that the war has made her sweetheart different somehow, and the mother sure that her son is trying to conceal something from her, that he is in very great danger or is wounded, for he never wrote that way before. It is hard to think of the everlasting censor as the cause of it all. And yet in such matters it is undoubtedly best to follow the lead of the French, who know the German spy system so well that they are exceedingly careful about disclosing military information. Not only do they strictly censor their mails and their press, but in metro trains and stations, in the theatres, cafés and restaurants, everywhere they post warning signs, "*Méfiez-vous, taisez-vous; les oreilles ennemis vous écoutent,*" "Take care, keep silent; enemy ears are listening to you."

Paris, I found, still sat out of doors—at cafés, at gateways in shirt-sleeves, in windows, at shop fronts, and at dingy tables before the doors of restaurants, with pedestrians walking lazily about in search of seats. Paris was Paris of the old days, and yet it was different. There were the same taxis, the same old crawling fiacres, the same stores with the same porcelain letters on

their windows, the same sergeants de ville motioning traffic this way or that on the street corners; but it was not the Paris I used to know. Now there were soldiers everywhere, and every person you met looked grave. Everywhere you passed maimed soldiers and childless and widowed mothers. Letters from home kept asking how Paris looked. One girl wanted to know if there were still pretty clothes in the windows. Yes, there are; but the French do not think about pretty clothes. Their minds are on their soldiers at the front, and if they have any money to spend they are reminded by an appealing poster at every turn of the fifth loan for the national defense. There is the Rue de la Paix, with Paquin's and Cartier's, but it isn't the same; it isn't young any more, for the war has taken all the men. Paris is still gay, but its glamour is dimmed. It is not the soul-suffocating Paris that it was before the war, for now every man is a soldier, and the women are overflowing with a spirit of patriotism that makes them ready and eager to give him respite from his month of horror in the trenches. It is as if there were a better spirit even in things evil.

Deep as were the wounds of France, there was a perceptible resuming of gaiety with the advent

of the Americans. It was easy to see springing up through the ashes of grief a renaissance of hope and confidence that America's entry into the war would make an allied victory certain. Paris, ever cosmopolitan, I found still a fascinating whirlpool, more fascinating because it was now even more cosmopolitan than it used to be. I expected to find it lifeless, evacuated, but for those doing war work; but in outward appearance it seemed to me no more affected by the war than does New York City. To be sure, there were women doing the work of men, and there were soldiers of all nations in the streets; but the cafés and restaurants were open, as were several of the theatres. Subdued though it was, you could almost see the city begin to take on a new lease of life with the coming of our troops. At first, of course, the Yankees simply aroused interest. The French had seen the English, the Canadians, and the Australians: the American was simply another kind of soldier, and only a sample at that, for the Germans had taken care to spread the rumor that our entry into the war was too late to do any good, that it would take us three years to land an army which would be of any practical relief to the French. This the people in general fully believed, especially since

the same feeling was prevalent among the English, who were ever ready to voice the opinion that we should have entered the war before we did. Before I came home, however, these ideas had changed as if by magic. The Parisian had come to recognize the American by his campaign hat; women began to wear felt hats, and the fad spread like wildfire. Everything was "à l'Américaine." The American, I have discovered, is a type distinctly different from the European: he likes to be talked about; he likes to be in evidence everywhere—he always has the best seats at the operas; he likes the best even if it costs the most; and he likes to be flattered. These traits the clever French were quick to discern, and with an eye of thrift on the American dollar, with which our army is well equipped, they have psychologically put the discovery to good use, with the result that the American is ever in the Parisian limelight, while the Frenchman sits at his "caisse," pulls the strings, and, though he is hardly glad that there is a war, reaps an unsown harvest from it.

The shops in the Rue de Rivoli seemed to be as well patronized as ever, if one might judge from the number of private cars anchored in front of them. Rumpelmayer's was crowded

with French, English, and American officers with their ladies, who, seated at little tables, were enjoying very poor imitations of American sodas and ices but a decidedly better assortment of 'patisserie,' individual cakes—the best I ever tasted. With an American girl friend who had been in Paris since the outbreak of the war I emerged from the four-flanged door of this Paris Huyler's into the afternoon sunshine. We walked through the Tuileries garden, where the flowers were in their usual glory, and the children were sailing boats in the pond as happily as ever. I believe that, even if the Hun were at the very gates of the city, the Parisians would find time to cultivate their flowers. Beauty is simply necessary to their existence. Nor is it any easier to suppress the children. Though official Paris frowns on public festivity and prohibits public dancing, it cannot prevent the boys and girls from laughing and dancing in the public parks. The Bois de Boulogne swarms with them every sunshiny afternoon, laughing and playing with hoops, balloons, skip-ropes, and hundreds of different toys, while their nursemaids sit on benches and sew or knit for the soldiers.

There were no sight-seeing automobiles in front of Cook's or the American Express Com-

pany, the tourist does not exist now; but the banking of these two institutions has increased by leaps and bounds. At the windows of the receiving and paying tellers there is always a line of Americans waiting to deposit money or to send it home or to cash their pay checks. One easily meets old acquaintances here. If an American is not at work, not at the theatre, not at a café, and not sight-seeing, you may be sure to find him at the "Y," which is comfortably domiciled in a private house (still the property of the Bonaparte family, I believe) in the Avenue Montaigne, taken over by the Y. M. C. A. for the period of the war. It is a stone mansion with a delightful courtyard, where in the afternoon and evening young American girls serve sandwiches, cake, coffee, tea, lemonade, chocolate, and—real ice cream! Seated at the small green iron tables I found Americans of both sexes who were doing war work in the city, together with several American Ambulance men I knew, and here and there a soldier. Right here I wish to say that it is the old American Ambulance and American Field Service men, and the Americans who joined the French army before our entrance into the war—especially the aviators, who have done most to weld Franco-American friendship. These men

were, on the whole, exponents of the best of American life and institutions. The French appreciated them, and—perhaps on the principle that a prophet is honored everywhere except in his own country—treated them with more respect and courtesy than they seem to have received at home. But, to go back to the green tables in the courtyard, it seems to a soldier mighty good to talk to those daintily-uniformed maids of America over a cup of chocolate when he has not seen one for days and probably weeks. And they will talk—it is part of their religion! They certainly do cheer a fellow up and send him back to duty with a lighter heart. In the evening the long writing table in the writing-room of the “Y” is crowded with men writing letters home; the huge leather easy-chairs of the library are filled with readers; the pool-table draws some either as players or as lookers, and, whenever there is not a speaker, a singer, or a sleight-of-hand performer in the main room, the piano is surrounded by soldiers and sailors with violins, mandolins, banjos, or guitars, and all with voices.

I had the pleasure of attending and assisting a class in French conducted by Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., who is working devotedly and unceasingly for our men in Paris, as is also another

member of the American 'colony' in Paris whose work is not so widely known. This woman has lived in Paris for several decades, does more for the soldiers individually than has any one else, but she works silently and unostentatiously, as by inviting three or four boys at a time to dinner in her beautiful home and then taking them to the movies or to the theatre. She was a friend of one of the boys in my company, and asked us two to dine with her but upon our arrival invited us to take a bath! Of course we were just longing for one, but who but Madame S—— knew it? She seemed to know by instinct exactly what we needed. We might lounge about, read, write letters, or even go to sleep, but whatever we did we had 'to make ourselves at home,' we must cast formality to the winds and do nothing we did not wish to do. Can anyone imagine what a place like this meant to us boys, thousands of miles away from even our home land, not to speak of our homes themselves? It was Saturday night when we were there, and she had "Boston baked beans" especially for us, for she knew it would be more like home (four or five visits with such hospitality and it *was* home!). After a sumptuous dinner she took us to the cinema, which was, to be sure, nothing but

54 Our First Ten Thousand

a movie show, yet to me, bathed and fed and comforted, the orchestra, composed of wounded French musician soldiers, seemed almost equal to the Boston symphony. The dramatization of "Le Comte de Monte Cristo," a comedy, the Pathé Weekly, and a Charlie Chaplin picture comprised the bill. The Chaplin pictures are great favorites with the French soldier, who laughs at them with more than childish glee, just as at other times he sits entranced by beautiful music. The 'poilu' is a queer fellow in his likes and dislikes.

Since there was no work for us the first week, we were allowed to do what we pleased, and the natural thing to do was to go sightseeing, even though on every corner we Americans had to run the gauntlet of vendors of post cards and souvenirs. We went to the Trocadero and the Eiffel Tower, where a poor old man, Monsieur Appay, who had served as official guide since the erection of the tower, had been put out of business since the government had closed the shaft to visitors and established a wireless station at the top. It was all shut within gates now, the elevators were silent, and two soldiers paced around it with bayoneted guns.

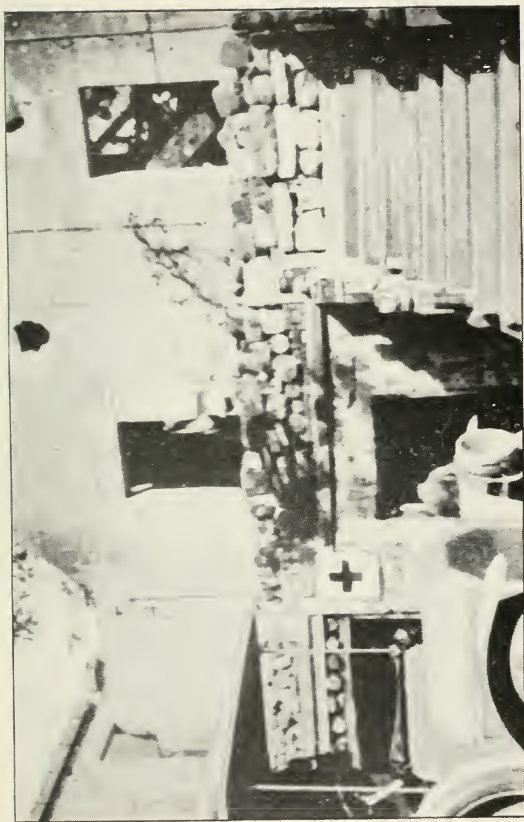
But even if we could not get into the tower, there was still the 'Grande Roue,' nearly as high,

which, as it was Sunday afternoon, would be in motion at two o'clock. We took our seats in the mammoth wheel—each revolution of which into the air constitutes a trip—and from the top had a wonderful panorama of the city with the Seine girding it like a silver ribbon. Not all the passengers saw the picture, however; for, since the wheel is situated in an amusement park, the crowd was a typical one. In our car were a half-dozen boys who sang street songs, tried to overturn the car in mid-air, and acted generally as only youngsters can. From here we went to Napoleon's tomb, and another step or two brought us to the Invalides, the courtyard of which is now given over to the display of captured German trophies—guns, shells, aeroplanes, parts of Zeppelins, pieces of clothing, altogether making a veritable museum. The popularity of this place on a Sunday afternoon equals that of an automobile show on a closing Saturday night.

In the Luxembourg Museum we saw Rodin's 'Le Baiser' and 'Saint Paul'; but on the whole the museum is now hardly worth a visit, for the best works of art have been taken away and hidden beneath sand and stone to protect them from any possible damage from an air raid. The same is true of the Louvre, which, with the exception

of three or four rooms containing mediæval sculpture, is closed entirely. The Luxembourg gardens had not changed, however; indeed they seemed more beautiful than ever, with their fountains and flowers, children playing ball, and grown-ups listening to the band concert. Out of the gardens it was only a step to the Latin Quarter, which I recognized by the blue and white plaques on the corners of the streets. It was surely the 'Boul Mich,' for there were drawings in charcoal and crayon on the deserted battered walls, the caricatures and bars of music, the bold nudes and bits of satyric verse and flowing signatures; but there was no life. Here and there was an antique shop or book-store, where a woman sat all day and waited for customers; but the Apaches and the students were in the trenches, the model and the grisette were in hospitals or working on farms or serving as waitresses or doing some kind of useful work. War, a leveller hardly less potent than death itself, has reformed the Apache, whether he be street gamin or grown-up criminal, and inspired him to vie with the student for the Croix de Guerre.

That evening, as I crossed the bridges of the Ile de la Cité spanning the mysterious stretches



A SHELLED HOSPITAL

of dark water connecting the leaden blotches of looming buildings, and passed into the shadow of the towers of the Cathedral of Notre Dame, which gleamed with rusty silver in the moonlight, tears filled my eyes, half with sadness, that Paris had lost so much of the beautiful, yet half with gladness that so many millions of souls had united to sacrifice, for a common cause, all the things they held dearest in life.

CHAPTER IV.

LIFE IN PARIS.

AT the end of a week an office was opened on the historic spot at 35 Rue Constantine, near the Invalides. A four-floor stone house of some 20 rooms was the first headquarters of the American Expeditionary Forces in France. General Pershing's office was on the second floor of the building, and directly under it was that of the adjutant-general, where we began our work of making a card file of the seven or eight thousand Americans then on French soil. We were provided with commutation and rations, that is, we each of us received two 'metro,' or subway, tickets with which to ride to and from work, and a dollar and a half a day with which to buy our own food, an arrangement which pleased us much better than being compelled to eat the food at first served in the barracks. At a restaurant two blocks away we were able to obtain a substantial meal for two francs and a half; and—for the cleverness of French storekeepers is unsurpassable—the proprietor of the establishment retained our trade by writing his menu card on the second day in both

French and English! Since, however, the food there could be had only by the table d'hôte method, and since the menu included many things for which we did not care, we tried 'eating round.' A visit to the boulangerie, for instance, gave us a piece of bread; two doors away was the laiterie, where we bought some baby milk and cheese; across the street to the fruit store for apples and peaches and perhaps a bar of chocolate, and we had a much more enjoyable lunch for a franc and a half, even though we had to eat on the street. Passers-by would smile; but we were soldiers, and they knew!

The thought of continuing to sleep on the ground of the courtyard did not appeal to me when I knew that within a few hundred yards were hundreds of vacant rooms awaiting occupants; consequently I had a talk with the colonel who was my commanding officer, and received permission to live anywhere in the city I chose. A pension near the Gare Saint Lazare was my choice, for I had stopped there four years before and knew it to be a very comfortable house. The blue and white plaque over the portal with its number five assured me I had the right place. A pull at the bell, the lock snapped, the door opened, and I entered the hall to meet, coming

from a door on the right, my old friend the concierge, who, like Saint Peter, passes judgment on all who enter there. A smile and a puzzled look of faint recollection spread over his countenance—then a beam, and he remembered me. With an outburst that required an attentive ear and a close application of mind to follow, he shot a volley of rapid-fire questions at me while he led me across the stone-paved courtyard and into the house. “*Ou êtes-vous, Marie? Descendez!*” And Marie could be heard pattering down the spiral staircase, a tiny, cross-eyed bit of humanity in her clean blue starched apron, who had served as a domestic in the household of Madame Bonnard ever since she could remember. Marie’s flow of French was like the babbling of a brook and its purity of accent a delight; moreover, she was possessed of a better memory than the portly concierge. “*Mon dieu—c’est vous, monsieur—soldat Américain!*” she cried ecstatically, her hands in the air. Informing me that madame was not in for the present but would return at evening, Marie preceded me through various dark, crooked passageways to a large square room with two French windows looking out on the court. A hundred and fifty francs a month was the rent, with a franc a day

for petit déjeuner, or breakfast, and an extra charge for electric lights. That night I slept between sheets for the first time since leaving home, and how good they felt! In the morning I was awakened early by Mimi, the black cat, who was sharpening her claws on the bed covers—another homelike touch!—and again, an hour later, by Marie with a tray and a stream of chatter. “Vous avez bien dormi, monsieur?” She closed the windows, placed the tray on the bedside table, took my shoes, and left the room to shine them. Three slices of toast with a bit of butter, a huge cup of chocolate with a lump of sugar, and by the time I was dressed Marie was back with the shoes like mirrors. Then a glance at the Paris edition of the New York Herald, for sale at all news-stands, ten minutes spent standing in line to purchase a metro ticket at the guichet, and I was at my desk.

That evening as my chum and I left the Marigny theatre, we discovered that the metro had stopped running at eleven o'clock, and so, as it was a long distance up to the barracks, I invited him to go home with me. The concierge, who retires at nine, admitted us genially for a small consideration, and Marie found two of us in the bed next morning. Of course before night

the rest of the fellows had found out that I had a room with a real bed in it, and five of them insisted on going home with me to try it. They did, and Marie nearly fainted the next morning when she found two men in bed and one in a blanket on the floor in my room, and the same number disposed in the same way in a vacant room across the hall. Madame Bonnard herself, a little old lady of perhaps sixty, with sparkling black eyes and black hair streaked with gray, spry as a spring chicken, bubbling over with enthusiasm, and loquacious as Tennyson's brook, insisted on entertaining me and as many friends as I cared to bring with me in her salon every Sunday afternoon. This typically French institution she held in a spacious room resplendent in gold-framed mirrors, a piano, and Louis XIV furniture, consisting chiefly of exquisitely carved chairs and a table supporting a family album filled with age-yellowed likenesses of centuries of prelates and soldiers.

Outgrowing its first quarters in the Rue Constantine, our government soon leased the Hotel Sainte Anne, a six-story building in the street of the same name and a stone's throw from the Avenue de l'Opéra. To this building I was transferred, and was assigned to the registration

department of the Motor Transportation Division. More officers and clerks kept arriving, and the three hundred rooms were soon filled with desks, typewriters, and office furniture, till the whole effect was that of an enterprising business concern. Of course the business wheels did not run any too smoothly in a country whose language and institutions differ so widely from our own. Since a very few of our men could speak French, time and patience were frequently both lost. I have been in the room with officers who, while waiting for an interpreter to be released by someone else, impatiently cursed their own inability to use the language. At first I was rather surprised to find that so many Frenchmen could speak English, but of course it is not at all strange when one remembers that they have had England with them for three years. At the very beginning of the war French women were foresighted enough to learn English immediately, with the result that many English-speaking French girls are employed by us as interpreters, typists, and telephone operators.

Directly opposite our building was the 'grog shop,' as it was generally known, the place where the enlisted man ate his midday meal—a little low ceilinged room, grotesquely decorated with a

nickel-plated 'bar' at the entrance and a half-dozen long marble-topped tables in the rear. Such sudden and overwhelming business seemed to have paralyzed the faculties of the vast man with the once-white apron who served now as bartender and now as assistant-chef to his small overworked wife in the kitchen serving French fries, eggs 'sur le plat,' or huge bowls of steaming coffee. So busy was he that he could not keep account of what he served, knew nothing of checks or cash-register, and took your three francs and your word for the same with an amazingly implicit trust in your honesty. Any noon you might see the little room crowded with soldiers and among them now and then two or three sailors on leave from one of the seaports, who, having just arrived with a convoy, had thrilling tales to tell of battles with submarines. Let me say here that the sailor on leave always finds his way to Paris as fast as he can. Not so the trench soldier, however! After a month in the trenches all he wants is to sleep for a while. For him Paris comes afterwards.

The officers, of course, had their own favorite resorts; the English favor the Meurice, the American was apt to select the Crillon in the Place de la Concorde as a place of residence. By

no means did all our officers live there, for they were scattered over the city in smaller hotels and pensions; but the Crillon was the unofficial stopping-place of all our important commissions to the city, and the tea-room was not a whit different in appearance on any afternoon from that of the Waldorf or the Biltmore on the same afternoon.

But the Sainte Anne did not prove to be a very permanent resting place, for one day at the end of August we heard rumors that headquarters were to be moved nearer the front. A rumor works in the army as it does everywhere else, only more so. One man hears that something is going to happen, and he tells someone else. Perhaps he hears it and perhaps he makes it up out of the imaginings of his own mind, or it may be that he merely wants to cause a bit of excitement or have something to talk about. At any rate, a soldier is always prepared for anything, and in this case the rumor proved to be true; for on the twenty-seventh we were ordered to pack up our typewriters and household furniture and prepare for a move. Personally, I was sorry to leave the metropolis, with its advantages and luxuries, for a place where we were certain to find very few such things; but "c'est la guerre!" For forty-

eight hours we worked night and day doing everything imaginable in order to have things in readiness by the first day of September, the date set for our departure. The night before we left we determined to have a real party, for it might be our last opportunity, at least for some time; so we started out by dining at the Café de Paris.

The impression prevails that Paris is nearly foodless and that people are starving there. So, no doubt, they are, but if you have a fifty-franc note you can buy as good a dinner there—yes, a better one—than you can get anywhere else in the world. That is the kind of dinner we had. The Café de Paris is perhaps the most exclusive restaurant in the city, but for this reason Parisians themselves never eat there, preferring Peter Noel's Ristorante Savoia, or a similar place where the food is perhaps better and the prices quite some lower. But the Café de Paris has a reputation. Here you find English officers, and now Americans, in abundance, with scores of beautiful women. Paris has put a ban on dancing during the war and there is no music in the restaurants, but you forget all about music in watching a major at a neighboring table, in whose office one of our present companions works, as he feeds champagne and cigarettes to a painted lady op-

posite him and tries to make her understand with hands and signs and facial expressions what it is all about. The major and your companion pretend not to see each other, but each is aware of the other's presence, and the major blushes, possibly because he has told your companion only this afternoon that the pictures on his desk are those of his wife and daughters. But this is Paris!

Two hours over oysters, soup, duck, lamb, peas, artichokes, fruit salad, raspberries, and ice cream, and we were in a taxi bound for Montmartre. Through infinite streets we wound, until at the end of a short thoroughfare the driver stopped and turned with a 'Voilà, messieurs! trois francs cinquante,' which we paid with a 'pourboire' and entered with the crowd. There were no lights outside, but we knew it was the same old Folies-Bergère. Seats were offered us but as we had four in the front row, purchased from one of those agencies in the Place and Avenue de l'Opéra which are doing such a rushing business these days, we were passed with a "Bien, monsieur." Finally, at half past eight the doors were opened and the crowd in the lobby surged into the large foyer, a huge carpeted hall. With a gush the girls of Paris came rushing in

and draped themselves on the sofas, each extending an invitation in broken English to sit beside her and order something to drink, then the orchestra began and the curtain rose. The show, a mixture of French and English, was a trifle inferior to our musical comedies in both music and comedy, but a bit better in costume and general beauty. There was a wonderful girl violinist; but, much to my surprise, the war spirit had not as yet moved the manager to institute anything American—as I found he had done later when I was there again about Christmas time. At intermission the salon was a picture, with a fountain of water and a girl's orchestra in the center of the foyer, and around it tables at which were seated the nations of the world, with waiters scurrying among them carrying trays of drinks.

The next morning saw us at the Gare de l'est at eight o'clock. General Pershing's headquarters' train of twenty-two cars waited on track two for the three hundred American officers and hundred enlisted men, who made up the Headquarters Company. There were also several black, smoky, snake-like trains filled to overflowing with French soldiers who were leaving for the front. French officers and their wives, poilus and their whole families, were at the station, which ran a

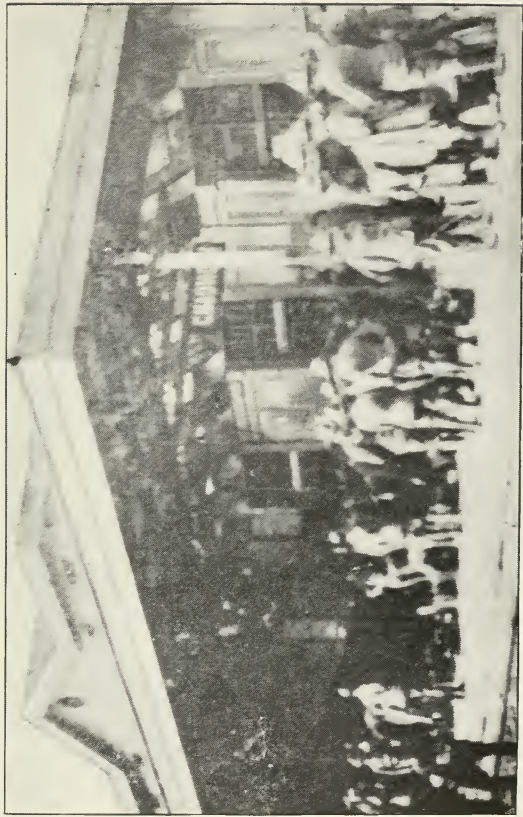
river of tears. I saw more kissing that morning than I ever expect to witness again at one time and in one place, and one's heart ached to think in how many cases it was the last kiss! Some women clapping their hands to their faces, were weeping passionately, yet they would have hated their husbands or sons or fathers or brothers if they had not gone. Others with just as much reason to weep, with grief in their hearts just as poignant, outwardly showed no sign of it. Certainly the spirit with which the brave French people bear their misfortunes puts the world of whiners to shame. With a patient shrug of the shoulders and a resigned murmur of "C'est la guerre," they begin their lives over again and again.

CHAPTER V.

CHAUMONT AS WE SAW IT FIRST.

OUR train sped on southeastward, crossing and recrossing the Seine. Here and there one of our motor-cycles would run along beside us, or we would overtake and leave behind a motor truck, exchanging yells with the drivers. Heads were thrust out of every window and all eyes were intent on the kaleidoscopic stucco houses with red tiled roofs, the endless white roads, the flashing little bridges where old men were angling idly for fish or where women were washing clothes at the water's edge, on a barge-woman gliding slowly down the river on a flat, unwieldy craft, or on the towers of a monster cathedral crowning a tiny habitation slumbering in the slanting sunshine—the seeming mother of the little close-lying houses round about it.

The train stopped at Troyes, and we 'tore out' to buy sticks of bread and eating chocolate from women with baskets. The government furnished our compartment with a can of salmon and a can of marmalade, and I had brought a bag of crackers, some one produced a can-opener, an-



ARRIVAL OF HEADQUARTERS A. E. F., AT CHAUMONT, SEPT. 1, 1917

other made dishes from old newspapers, and before we reached Chaumont we had enjoyed a substantial and satisfying meal.

For days the little hamlet, honored and flattered that it had been chosen from all the other towns in France for the headquarters of General Pershing, had been expecting us. The square at the station was a black mass of humanity and the parching streets that led to the barracks were crowded on both sides. American flags floated from every other house, and girls and even men kissed us and strewed flowers in our way. Thus escorted in triumph by people who were in our eyes themselves the real heroes, we arrived at a building that looked ominously like the Caserne de Reuilly in Paris. It wasn't, however, for at mess that night we had real white bread and American cooking! Of course we were tired, but soldiers are never too tired to explore the town.

Provençals are not like Parisians. Parisians are Frenchmen tempered by cosmopolitanism—tempered by civilization and education and by contact with other people; Provençals are true Frenchmen. Innocent, harmless, and useful, these simple religious country folk do not tire of their quiet pastures. When we arrived in Chau-

mont the humble present was but a relic of the same humble past. It was impossible to buy anything new or recent in the shops. In less than a month, however, the storekeepers had like Rip Van Winkle roused themselves from their long sleep and were making bi-weekly trips to Paris; these contented denizens of the past had taken a new lease of life and business was thriving. When I left Chaumont four months later, the town had changed as if by magic; it had become literally surcharged with American ideas, ideals, and business methods.

The observed of all observers that first night, we sauntered through the crooked little cobble-paved streets, meeting a wine shop every other door, the alternate doors being those of the butcher, the baker, the candlestickmaker, the cobbler, and so forth. The French tradesman is the backbone of the republic. His store is always one large room on the street, in the rear of which, and above, the family resides. At night curious iron shutters are drawn down over the whole establishment; and, thus closed up, the town sleeps. The family life is very private. Everyone goes out of doors to drink and make merry, but the real home life goes on to the exclusion of the outside world. It has often been

remarked that there is no word for 'home' in the French language; but the word 'foyer' is something almost sacred in what is designated, and 'à la maison' means far more than 'in the house.' The stranger never sees the interior of a French house.

But as all the little crooked streets in these little French villages eventually lead to the Hotel de Ville, or the town hall, we presently came out into the picturesque and unevenly built square, or rather triangle, in which it stands, a spot suggestive of historical romance in all its nooks and corners, with its houses jutting out irregularly here and there beyond their sisters and making the street and sidewalk—if there is any sidewalk—crooked, its odd by-ways and flights of steps leading nowhere, its quaint gabled roofs, its utter lack of all architectural proportion, and the whole fascinating irregularity of it all. There was one little shop in which trays of alluring 'patisserie' were displayed on the home-made counters and hot chocolate was served at two small tables. Two young girls were in attendance, while their aged grandmother, seated on high at the 'caisse,' took in the francs faster than she could count them, wondering all the time with a furrowed brow how she could enlarge her single small room

to accommodate the rushing business, and following with eyes of regretful greed the customers who, looking in at the door from without and deciding they would have to wait too long, turned away.

On emerging from here about half-past eight we were surprised to find that this little town of some five thousand souls had retired. It was not dark—it was black! no street lamps had been lighted for three years, lest a Gotha might spot them. As there was no moon, and only here and there a faint light glimmering through a shuttered window, it was no easy task to find our way home; but we finally arrived, with no greater mishap than running into a dog which a woman had on a leash, causing the animal to yelp with surprise.

The next day we were busy unpacking our things and establishing our offices. Two buildings were used for business, and a third was turned into sleeping quarters for the enlisted men. The officers were billeted in the village houses, and when the whole three hundred had been accounted for there were no vacant rooms to be hired for love or money. The town was put under military rule, with one of the majors appointed as mayor. He was supposed to have a

list of the occupants of every house, a point which has an important bearing on one of our later escapades. After a hard day's work we had the offices not only habitable but also securely camouflaged behind formidable black curtains, impermeable to light, which were adjusted at all the windows.

Sunday followed; and, although the saying goes that there is no Sunday in the army—which is true—we were allowed a half-holiday in the afternoon. What should we do? Cycling is, as in England, still in vogue on the continent, where the average citizen does not own a motor car and is not too proud to ride a bicycle. It is such extremely good exercise that it ought to be in form everywhere, especially in democratic America. We tried to rent bicycles at a store in the village, but the meagre supply had been exhausted and we were compelled to use our feet.

With no fine art to show, with none of the wonderful monuments which make Rouen what it is, Chaumont is nevertheless interesting to the student and fascinating to the thinker and dreamer. Through streets of fantastic architectural mystery, tangled like a labyrinth you ramble on until you reach a cliff—which I named Paradise—whence you can see the silvery wind-

ings of the Marne, the grassy fields, the grazing herds, and here and there a lone farmhouse on the straight white road leading to the dark blue haze of the Vosges Mountains in the background. It is indeed 'la belle France,' a peaceful and beautiful land for which one might willingly suffer or even die. And then when by and by, towards evening, you descend from 'Paradise,' there before you is a moving picture no less interesting. The pulsating bell of the cathedral is calling the village to worship, and the whole quiet little town seems to be responding. You walk on with them. A timid 'Good Night' startles you—for Chaumont has learned to say 'Good Night' and 'Good Morning,' and you look down at four little girls, whose courage to speak to you has been strengthened by their desire to inform you that they have learned the English language. You ask their names and ages and if they go to school; whereupon, reassured still further by my acquaintance with their own language, they take your hands—and you wish you had two more! You pass a padre in a black hat and cassock, with a huge cross on his breast supported by a beaded chain; he nods and smiles copiously. Now comes a long line of boys and girls led by a priest; they are children whom the war has made orphans.

There are women, all of them dressed in 'deuil' or mourning, and many of them young, a never-ending line of black, which contrasts incongruously with the blue uniforms of the French soldiers 'en permission' beside them. You meet several American Red Cross nurses out for a walk with our officers, for the Mackey-Roosevelt hospital unit is stationed here. There are so few nurses in comparison with the number of officers that they are much in demand; indeed the demand so far exceeds the supply that the heads of the least attractive are sometimes turned by the unwonted attentions showered upon them. Since a nurse is not allowed to speak to an enlisted man, even though she may be an old acquaintance or even a sister, the soldiers are driven to seek consolation in the village belles.

On September 5 General Pershing arrived and formally took possession of the grim and spacious castle with shaded lawns that had been prepared for his residence. All that day there was much excitement, with people hurrying hither and thither and cars of American, French and British officers arriving and departing. Inside, too, there was commotion; for four of us who had been occupying one of the spacious rooms belonging to the adjutant general pending the time when he

should require it for use now had to move from our comfortable quarters. Two took their beds and other possessions over to the regular sleeping quarters, where the cots were already so close together that there was hardly room enough to squeeze between them. The other fellow and I happened to be dining that evening at the only hotel in town worthy of the name, where none but officers were allowed to hold rooms, and then, owing to the constant influx all the time, only for four days; after that they had to find rooms in some of the houses in town. On learning our tale of woe, however, the young widow proprietress fitted up secretly a steam-heated room over the stable (in times of peace the abode of a chauffeur or an attendant maid); and there away from the cold damp barracks and in the comfort of real sheets and the sensation of having one's breakfast brought to him in bed, we stayed till I left Chaumont a month later.

And right here I want to say that we all found the officers of the Headquarters Company were, with hardly a single exception, real men. It is mighty hard for the enlisted college man, or for any man of education, to take orders from an officer far inferior in morality and in social standing, and especially from one who will take ad-

vantage of his bars to belittle a man in the ranks. Our Chaumont officers were not that kind. My hat is off to them! They were our friends.

And the other friends in Chaumont—shall we ever forget them? There was old Monsieur Curie, the village pharmacist, a man of perhaps seventy, who seems to remember all the wars that France ever had, and was one of the few men in town who were interested in political affairs and read “La Patrie” for other reasons than to find out what it has to say about the crops. He called me into his shop one day as I was passing and made me take a chair, while he argued the superiority of the metric system of weights and measures, discussed the war and the ‘sales Boches,’ and told us many interesting things about the German spy system. Probably few of us have realized what enormous advantage a spy system has upon a nation contemplating offensive war. Before the outbreak of hostilities, it seems, the German spies had in French territory an army of thirty thousand spies of both sexes—Germans, Swiss, and Belgians, scattered about in garrison towns, at railway junctions, at strategic points, and especially in places where there was concentration of troops. As servants in clubs and private houses and workmen in industries they

infested the country. They had made it a point to obtain positions on the French railroads in order to insure the failure of transportation of troops and war material at the outbreak of hostilities, and clog the function of the roads as indispensable auxiliaries to the combatant army. It is well known how the French commandeered ten thousand taxicabs in Paris, each to carry five French soldiers fully equipped against the Germans when they were within striking distance of the capital, thus putting an army of fifty thousand in the field. The story of how the taxicabs saved Paris is a favorite one; I have heard it fifty times if I have once.

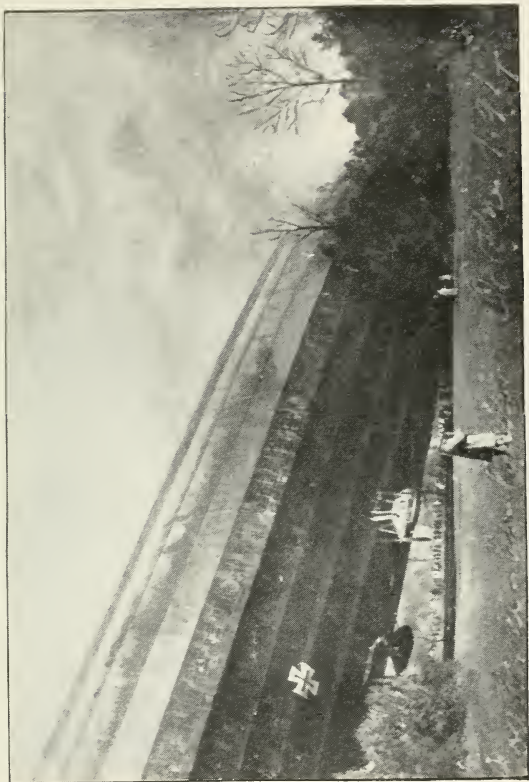
Then there was Thérèse, whose pleasant friendship helped me pass happily what would otherwise have been weeks of loneliness. On our way to the barracks one dark evening we overtook five women who had no flashlight. We lent them ours, and after much difficulty induced one of them to talk with us. These new acquaintances proved to be the wife of the town jeweller, with her two daughters and two friends, and the chance meeting by the roadside led to repeated visits at the store which resulted in a great friendship with one of the daughters. She was a graceful slip of a girl, dark eyed and refined of fea-

ture. Country-bred, yet not ignorant of city ways, Thérèse had studied English for three years in the village school and could play Chopin, Debussy, and Beethoven with the same ease that the ordinary American plays ragtime—which she could not endure. We exchanged French and English lessons three times a week, and with such an adept teacher my progress was rapid. The family—her father, mother, brother, and sister—would gather about the round table, a log blazing in the fireplace, and listen wide-eyed and open-mouthed to my tales of the wonderful America. Chaumont was certainly glad to have us there, from the women who made a huge American flag for our commander-in-chief, to the groups of little boys going to school in their black cheesecloth overdresses, with books and lunch in bag slung over their shoulders and the little sisters by the hand, who would greet us eagerly with ‘Bonjour, soldat Américain!’ and proudly try to measure their small steps with ours.

Every evening a procession of ominous motor trucks and drays, on which were mounted the famous French ‘soixante-quinze’ guns, would grind its way through the little town and disappear down the hill toward Nancy; but one evening something more exciting happened. General

H——'s chauffeur drove up and told us that a little while before, as he was passing through Bourbonne-les-Bains on his way from Neufchâteau, a Zeppelin, the L 49, had come down there. To prove it he displayed a piece of the black cloth covering and a clip of shells from the machine gun it carried (of which he gave me two), and then cautiously withdrew from beneath his coat the altometer and a parachute belt. Next morning the newspapers announced the fall of the L 49 and of course all of us who could get leave went over to Bourbonne-les-Bains to see it.

There were thirty of us on the truck, and we had about twenty miles to go over straight white stretches of country road lined symmetrically on each side with tall poplars, and running through farming districts where everyone, in their curious sabots or wooden shoes, stood stock still in front of their single-room thatch-roof hovels (in which the whole family and the livestock live together, as they do in the streets of Naples) and watched us out of sight. When finally we rounded a corner into a narrow road thronged with spectators, automobiles, and what-not, it seemed to us like the first fifteen minutes following the end of a Harvard-Yale football game. *Viola!* There was the Zepp, and how it astonished us! We



THE L-49

had expected to see something from ten to twenty times the size of an aeroplane, but this huge ribbed monster seemed like the side of a mountain. It was longer than the largest and longest ocean liner ever afloat, and as wide in diameter as the height of a five-story apartment house. On the forward end, which was in a ditch, was painted in white 'L 49,' and on the middle of each side was the iron cross in white set off plainly by a black and a white stripe; otherwise the thing was coal black. To this monster balloon were attached two good-sized cars, which had carried the eight passengers—whom we later went to look at, with great satisfaction, behind the prison bars in the town jail, but whom we could not get to open their mouths. In the rear car were the motors, in addition to a machine gun and hundreds of pounds of death-dealing bombs. As the Zepp lay there with her nose in the ditch and her body supported across two tall trees, the propellers were left high in the air spread against the sky like the wings of a mighty windmill—a wonderful picture as we were leaving! The machine was not disturbed for about a week; then it was dismantled and the parts were sent to Paris, where they can be seen in the Invalides Museum. The next week I went to the front.

CHAPTER VI.

A WEEK AT THE FRONT.

"Quand Madelon vient nous servir à boire,
Sous la tonnelle on frole son jupon,
Et chacun lui raconte une histoire,
Une histoire à sa façon.
La Madelon pour nous n'est pas sévère.
Quand on lui prend la taille ou le menton
Elle rit, c'est tout le mal qu'elle sait faire.
Madelon! Madelon! Madelon!"

IT is the French marching song, and the snow-flakes are falling gently on a regiment of 'poilus' which is 'going in.' The French are smaller than the Americans, but they are as hard as nails. Steel helmets on their heads and rifles on their shoulders, this line of blue goes steadily along as the roar of the guns grows louder and louder. They do not grumble. They are not ordered to sing, but they do; sometimes it is the Marseillaise. We can imagine they are Americans, for our boys are now doing the same thing in the same way, with smokes in their mouths, their faces full of energy and laughter. I cannot imagine American troops going into battle singing the national anthem as do the troops of the French and other nations, for we are not built that way; but we do sing something, if only the famous ditty about the acrobatic grasshopper,

and we find it does us good. Singing can clip more kilos off a march, take more lead out of a pack, and drive more dampness out of clothing than anything else can. It helps the fellow back in the line who, because of a cold, a badly slung pack, a tight pair of shoes, or perhaps bad news from home is finding the going a bit hard; and it helps the fittest man there just as much.

We Americans joined the procession of slowly-moving vehicles behind the soldiers, the long gray cavalcade of covered carts, plodding men, and patient beasts that carry sustenance to the fighters—a system of crawling arteries without which even a victorious army would soon become weak and helpless. As we crept along there was plenty of time to notice the ruin that the war had wrought in the fair French country. Here was a big bridge in ruins, its steel girders twisted and turned in an unbelievable manner. Here were houses with roofs fallen inside, and here and there one with but a few tiles or beams remaining. Land which had been covered with fine forests was now a waste of leafless, branchless trunks and blackened stumps. The road was filled with shell-holes, which in turn were filled with muddy water. It was night and there were no lights. Our wheels spun round in the mud and

we made slow progress, till finally, reaching a place where there were dead horses and everything else in the way, we got out and walked.

Arrived at a dugout just behind the lines, we found ourselves in a mixture of khaki-clad ambulance drivers and French soldiers—a dramatic picture of Franco-American ‘camaraderie.’ They were writing letters home by the dingy light of a spluttering candle, or playing checkers, dominoes, or cards, or passing the ‘smokes.’ There was a chorus of ‘Keep the Home Fires Burning,’ and one of ‘There’s a Long, Long Trail,’ which the Frenchmen have learned to sing. These are the two favorites. There was a poilu with a green cord fastened at the shoulder—the ‘fourragère’—which he will tell you he won at Verdun, for he has been in the thick of the fight for three long years.

It was a strange and not altogether pleasant sensation to find one’s self actually at ‘the front,’ that long talked-of place of greatest danger. It was all so different from what war is often gloriously pictured and painted to be! There were no generals on horseback and no bright flags fluttering in the breeze; instead, only a rude trench full of weary men, with clothing soiled and torn, standing in mud up to their knees in an



A MACHINE GUN IN ACTION

inferno of unburied dead! But self-protection and self-preservation are instinctive, and Americans are no cowards; so we found ourselves ducking and dodging the whistling shells as we saw our French comrades do.

Night at the front is hideous. The great pieces keep firing all night long, the French batteries behind maintaining a continual barrage over our heads. Stretcher-bearers, picking their way back to the ambulances, trip and fall in the mud with groaning wounded, or they drop their burden and fall into holes of poisonous water at the approach of a shell, which will come spinning through the air and break the boughs of a tree beside you. Maxims roar. Now and then the dull boom of a 'heavy' causes the air to vibrate. An occasional bullet whistles over your head or spatters in the mud near you. It is very dark except when a flare or flash of a star-shell lights up the mist and searches everything with a grewsome greenish-yellow. Even the hollow faces of the living look ghastly to you, the faces of the dead stare with a livid grin, and the putrid odor of gas on the damp air is sickening. Dead bodies are piled in with sandbags as a defense, and arms and legs are sticking out everywhere. Everyone about you fearless, you mechanically acquire a

bravery which you know you do not possess. And yet there is a terrible fascination about it all.

Dawn breaks, and two hours later all is silence. The greater excitement abated, attention is given to enemies nearer home in the shape of rats, which we shoot at as they stick their heads out of holes here and there. From a hill several hundred yards in the rear you can look over into the German lines. Fifty or more German captives are led past, whom you see later repairing a road while the guards lie under the shade of a tree by the roadside. The Allies are fighting a clean fight for right. They respect the enemy and his plucky courage and treat their captives, I think, with more respect than they sometimes deserve. The soldiers, however, are not slow to pounce upon them and strip them of nearly all their clothing and personal belongings. One cannot help pitying them sometimes, when they are made to give up a locket or a crucifix, the talisman from a sweetheart or a mother.

The men who die at the front are stripped of all clothing and brought out on two-wheeled carts; then, after their identification tag has been removed, they are tied in coarse linen and dumped into one huge grave. The chaplain conducts a funeral service for the lot, the soldiers present

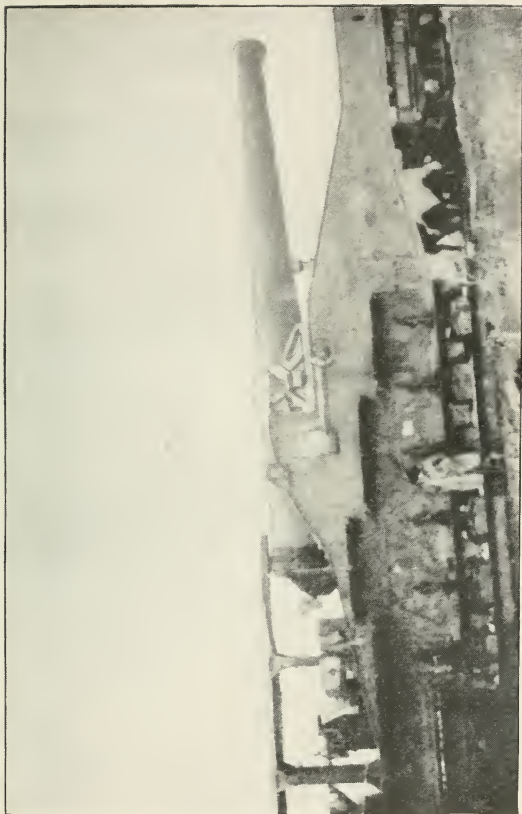
standing round the grave with bared heads. Quicklime is poured in, and it is the end. Awful as it is, there is no other way.

Men at the rear are continually employed digging and strengthening the trenches there and filling sandbags to be used in case a retreat becomes necessary. Nearly every building for a distance of many kilometers has been reduced to powder and every inch of ground is shell-plowed. I had never seen such indescribable desolation; it is most nearly comparable with the devastated areas resulting from a big city fire. I was surprised to see that the land just behind the lines and within easy shell-fire was inhabited. There had been a raid yesterday or last week or last month and the houses of the little village had been shelled by the Gothas and partly destroyed; yet they were inhabited. That might have been a street once—that shell-pocked thoroughfare, with its cobbles piled awry, its curbing bitten out as though by the teeth of a stone crunching giant, with scarcely a single house that has not gaping holes in the walls and piles of bricks and other debris lying in pitiful heaps in front of it, mute tokens of the devastation wrought by the enemy airmen. But in the middle of that pathetic ruined apology for a street the children were playing away again as

merrily as if nothing had happened, shouting to one another in a glee that no bombs seemed able to hush. This is symbolic of the spirit with which France is bearing her struggle, her devastation—it is with the heart-free, care-free spirit of childhood. One may crush but not conquer a race whose children can find happiness amid such surroundings, can abandon themselves to play almost before the shells have stopped falling upon their playground.

In somewhat the same way Young America's invincible sense of humor will tide him over many a rough place before this war is finished. There is a story told of an ambulance driver with the French army, who, when the shells were flying thick and fast about him got under his ambulance with a view to avoiding them. A French officer happening along asked him what he was doing; whereupon, not wishing to seem a coward, he replied that he was repairing his machine. Several days later he was awarded the Croix de Guerre for repairing his machine under shell fire!

And the young American is usually not slow to give a good account of himself in word as well as in deed. An American negro, happening one day to meet one of the several hundred Moroccans who are in the French service in one place,



A 'TROI'S CENT SOIXANTE' ON RAILS

and noting the resemblance in color, stepped up to him and asked him a question. The tall black man, looking down upon the short black man, said something in French, which the latter asked him to repeat. They stood and gazed at each other helplessly for several seconds, till finally the American settled the matter by looking up into the face of the African and saying convincingly, 'Yo' may be black, but yo' ain't no nigger.'

Not that the Moroccans cannot talk fast enough on occasion. One day, hearing a terrible noise in the direction of their encampment, I saw them throwing their mess-kits down in a pile on the ground and jabbering as only angry Moroccans can, because they had had no wine that meal and thought they were being neglected. This is typical of the French soldier. Give him his wine and he will fight till doomsday. If he has his quart of 'pinard' he is happy; if not, he is going to know the reason.

In what was left of the little village back of the lines was the town hall, now converted into a hospital by means of a coat of white-wash, a name and hospital number over the door, and a double row of white cots with a passageway between them side by side down the long bare room. Here and there an ominous white screen shut off a bed.

A few bandaged men, half dressed, sat on their cots and smoked. Over one hollow-cheeked, black-bearded, mangled man a Red Cross nurse, angel of mercy, was stopping, dressing a wound. The odor of disinfectant was strong. I did not remain long.

But outside, except for the purer air, it was hardly any better; there was ruin everywhere. Here was a mutilated shrine, there a broken statue. A field of little white crosses marked the graves of the victims of the raid. A half-obliterated coat-of-arms over an iron gateway where the 'maire' lived attracted my attention, and so did the church, a large stone building of which the little town once was proud. One end of the roof had been blown completely away, leaving an ugly hole through which the rafters could be seen. The blue and yellow and red stained-glass windows were strewn in a thousand pieces on the ground. The huge iron-bound door on rusty hinges stood open, allowing a vessel of stone, once used for holy water, to project as a bathing-place for small birds! I entered. Rows of dust-covered chairs stood on the stone floor; a lone candle burned before the statue of the Virgin; long, dim, dusky shadows gathered. I was alone; and on my knees I thanked God for the

rich experiences he was showering upon me, and I prayed for the world and for my dear ones at home as perhaps I had never prayed before. The happiest tears I have ever known ran quite unheeded down my cheeks and the stains and sorrows and sins of all the years seemed to go with them. As I left, a whirling, intoxicating wind was moaning through the long line of poplars outside; and one could almost hear in it the love messages of little ones the world over whose blood was waiting to be born into a new and better civilization—messages of gratitude to the numberless mothers and sweethearts who have made the great sacrifice and whose arms at night are stretched towards empty darkness.

"Think not on yesterday, nor trouble borrow
On what may be in store for you tomorrow,
But let today be your incessant care.
The past is past; tomorrow's in the air."

This is the spirit with which the men in the trenches endure the incredible present and the uncertain future with buoyancy and optimism. It is fortunate that they are always busy, that they have no time to think of anything but the awful business at hand. If there's a bullet for you, you'll get it—that is the fatalistic philosophy forced upon every man who goes under shell fire.

They come to have a sort of fearless contempt for death which they eminently prefer to wounds. The greatness of motive makes them children at heart. Life is ephemeral, transitory; it is nobler, then, to die for one's country than to be a coward. The cause is a righteous one; it is a crusade to secure for humanity and for posterity justice and the principles taught by Jesus Christ. This is the way the men reason it out; and they are spurred on by the belief that 'whosoever loseth his life for My sake' in this modern Golgotha, where myriad human skulls lie unburied 'shall find it' in due time. It is the memory of those they love, the comradeship of their companions, and their trust in God that makes them brave. War will not brutalize them; it will make them and soften their natures. Nowhere than here is there greater opportunity for sympathy and love and pity; and friendships tempered by mutual danger are eternal. The souls of men are being tried in a terrible furnace, from which many of the weak will come out strong and the strong still stronger; for there is a spiritual strength as well as physical. The real war is in the souls of men.

CHAPTER VII.

BACK TO CHAUMONT.

AFTER that never-to-be-forgotten week in hell, it was heaven to find my self back in Chaumont at my accustomed duties, even though everyone was pretty gloomy that morning because the newspapers were filled with dismaying reports and details of the Italian setback. My major, usually cheerful, looked very grave as he laid some transportation road maps on my desk and said, 'These are permanent,' adding with a pause and a whimsical smile, 'for five years.' And it looked like five years more of war! For four days there was a steady rumbling of trains through the town filled with men going to Italy to help stem the Hun tide; and there were long lines of flat cars loaded with 'seventy-fives' prudently camouflaged with spattered green and yellow.

The Frenchmen, so extremely excitable by nature, seemed not a bit perturbed by this sudden change for the worse; on the contrary, they became more and more determined. In cafés and on the street they earnestly and emphatically ex-

pressed their implicit trust in the Americans, in what they were doing and going to do; and their air of absolute conviction and confidence in our help showed that the trust gave them renewed courage and kept them strong.

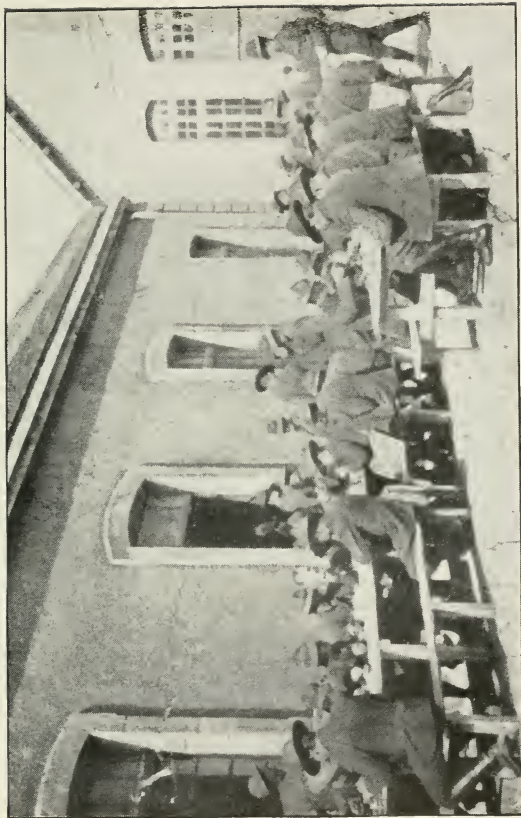
Having of course lost our room at the hotel during our absence from town, we were confronted on our return with the necessity of finding another suitable one. But fortune again seemed to favor us; for, chancing to talk with an Englishwoman in one of the stores, we found that she was leaving Chaumont the next day and that we might have the room she was vacating, which was but a five-minute walk from the office. The proprietress, who with two small children lived on the ground floor, was one of those strong, rough, rugged Italian women of impoverished households, with red hands, hair unkempt, and skirts askew. She had lived in France so long that she had forgotten most of the Sicilian she once knew, and yet she had been unable to learn French—the first person I have ever met who could not speak some language somehow. A word of Italian and a word of French joined by a mumble in God knows what tongue, and I could usually grasp the general meaning of what she was trying to say. At any rate, I was cer-

tain she understood us when we agreed to pay her fifty francs a month for the room, a sum which doubtless pensioned her for a year to come.

By a flight of crooked stone stairs we reached a low-studded room containing a fireplace, a huge mahogany bed, and a table, and a glance at a cupboard revealed an array of dishes, glassware, and silver-plated ware. Here in the evening, before blazing logs, a group of four or five of us would gather, after a visit to the shops in town and have a jolly feast. One of us would buy cake, another jam, another fruit, another cider, and another perhaps had received a box of goodies from home; for we were all socialists now, and whatever a man had he shared. We would chat and eat and smoke, and before the evening was over would probably sing to the accompaniment of a violin and a mandolin—and doubtless to the edification of the simple little family downstairs—every song we had ever known. It was difficult to obtain wood, for in France wood is not, as in America, lying about the streets. A shining two-franc piece, however, would always persuade some peasant near by to put on his wooden shoes, take a lantern in his hand, and go down into the cellar, where he would chop us enough to last a week and furthermore would insist on carrying

it to our room. Here, in our big old mahogany bed, my chum and I might lie until half-past eight in the morning, with no Marie or Madeleine bearing a tray of breakfast to call us 'paresseux' if we rolled over for another snooze to 'faire dodo.' Here we might lie and curse the reveille call, which we could hear indistinctly at seven o'clock. If we did, however, we found the oatmeal tin scraped clean and no bacon and potatoes, in which case we had to scuttle into the little café a few doors away and hurry Suzette to cook us some eggs. However, it was, we always reached the office on time—at nine o'clock: I defy the world to accuse us of tardiness once. If, perchance, we decided to eat at mess, we would probably obey the call of the bugle, snatch up our mess gear, and hie ourselves into line, extending one dish for oatmeal (or mush, as the case might be) and sugar, another for bacon and potatoes, and a cup for coffee. This was the everlasting breakfast, with only one element of chance in it—that we could not always be certain whether it would be mush or oatmeal. For myself, I always prayed for the latter.

At noon we had a cup of soup, a dish of 'slum' (which, for the uninitiated, is an indescribable beef stew), a vegetable or two, and either rice or,



MESS AT CHAUMONT

by way of surprising variety, bread pudding. On Wednesday and Saturday there were always beans. The evening meal, which was by far the best one of the day, was a repetition of the noon menu with the addition of stewed prunes or canned peaches. And right here I feel it my duty to publish a tip for my future wife, if these pages should happen to come into her hands: I promise faithfully to desert her if I ever hear her mention beef or any kind of canned or tinned food. The village children were not so fastidious, however. I can see now the haunting picture of a dozen or more ragamuffins, boys and girls, shoeless and with dirty faces, waiting for us outside the mess-hall door as we passed en-route to the dishwater—one of them with a pail for coffee, another with one for bread, another with one for meat, and the rest with tin cans for anything, ready to pounce with hungry eyes on whatever remained uneaten or undrunk in our mess kits.

The dishwater was of several varieties, ranging by degrees in cleanliness. If you were among the first in line, you would wash your dishes promptly in water that was hot and clean; but if you chanced to find yourself near the end of the procession you would not wash them at all—you

would consider them cleaner than they would be if dipped in that horrible cold, soupy water. Many a good meal I have hastened, and much indigestion I have endured, in order to be among the first.

Somewhat like the army of children that lay in wait for the scraps that fell from our table was the army of scrubwomen that besieged us for work in the offices. At first we employed the poor women of the town (it took some two hundred to clean the buildings at night) ; but as the news spread that we were paying thirty francs a week for about three hours' work each night, we soon had every day a score of applicants from far and near, each with a pitiable story of one or more dear ones killed at the front.

And their stories were only too true, if one might judge from the records in the little town cemetery on a hill overlooking the Marne, to which we walked one Sunday afternoon. Moss-covered sarcophagi lined its narrow thoroughfares and the appearance of everything was archaic, until suddenly, just ahead, there seemed to be a remarkable uniformity, and a pile of fresh earth told of a new grave dug. In this spot, drawn up as if in line of battle, there proved to be upwards of two hundred graves of those who

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had made the supreme sacrifice, all the same size and all the same distance apart, and at the head of each a standard bearing the words, 'Henri Bédard—mort pour la patrie—5 Septembre, 1917—agé 26,' or whatever the name and date might be. Two hundred from this little town of five thousand! and this number did not include those privately buried, or the hundreds of men lying unnamed and unburied in No Man's Land or eaten in the quicklime graves at the Front.

Quite different from such gruesome pictures was another scene upon which we stumbled the same Sunday afternoon. As we emerged from the woods to a clearing on the top of a hill we saw on the greensward along the bank of the canal a soccer game in progress between an infantry and an artillery regiment 'en repos.' The flat patch of green, as smooth as a billiard table, beside the canal bordered with tall dark green poplars, the picturesque thatched-roof houses with their red tiles, the clumps of brown bushes here and there, the white road, the windmills, the grazing cattle, the bright blue sky with white clouds, the dark blue haze of distant mountains, and in the foreground the running players in the vivid colors of their several uniforms, presented an interesting picture. At our approach the

game stopped and the players crowded curiously around us asking all kinds of questions. We took their pictures and the game proceeded.

On Sundays the pulsating bell of the dim old cathedral with its worn figures of mediæval saints in their broken niches on the outside walls, called the town to church. At first we had no intention of entering, but, changing our minds, we followed the crowd one day and slipped into a back seat. We three were the only American soldiers there. Candles were burning dimly at murky shrines in misty, dark recesses, some smouldering out in their gilded sockets. The speaker was so far away at the other end of the huge Latin cross that we could not hear what he said, and he spoke so rapidly that even had we been nearer we could not have understood. We did not fall asleep, however; for the richly-sculptured side chapels, the towering arches of Gothic mystery, the shadowy corners where countless dead reposed, the splendor of stained glass, and the priceless specimens of the art of Louis Treize kept us wide-eyed. A little girl in front of us insisted on turning around and smiling at us, whispering ecstatically to her mother, 'Soldats Américains!' The chanting was impressive, and so was the sight of the many soldiers in blue

scattered here and there among a sea of black-veiled women. In humorous incongruity, however, as it seemed to me, was the continual ringing of a bell, and the stalking about at the rear of a man dressed up as a Napoleon or a George Washington in a three-cornered black hat, a swallow-tailed coat with a red, white, and blue ribbon across his chest, silk knee breeches, buckles on his shoes, and a staff in his hand. Nevertheless, little as we had understood of what we had seen and heard, it had been good for us to be in an atmosphere of worship.

Business was now forging ahead rapidly in Chaumont—we had returned just in time for a festival resembling our own country fairs, at which almost anything imaginable could be bought in booths arranged in the square in front of the town hall. These stalls were continually crowded with soldiers in quest of souvenirs to send home. Rings with a replica of the Croix de Guerre, silk handkerchiefs adorned with patriotic embroidery, all sorts of war trinkets, were soon in the mails bound for America; till the regular storekeepers, jealous of the impromptu booths, established like shops in the middle of the street and waged bitter warfare with each other in spite of the fact that they all did more business than

they had ever dreamed of before. They looked upon the American private as a millionaire, though he had often not been paid for several months.

Perhaps one of the strangest things the boys discovered in this little French town was the fact that they could get a haircut for ten cents and a shave for five; but one had to wash one's own face thereafter. Such an opportunity to economize did not last long, however; for a soldier accustomed to pay twenty-five cents for a haircut would think the barber too 'reasonable' and offer him a large tip, with the result that all the barbers in town forthwith increased their rates rapidly. Another establishment that did a rushing business was the municipal bathhouse. As there were probably not half a dozen private bathtubs in Chaumont, there was always a long line of Americans in front of the public bathhouse awaiting their turn. A shower-bath ticket could be bought for a half-franc. The proprietress was surprised that I came as often as twice a week, but seemed to be glad that I was so dirty.

Then there were the weekly market days, when women with black shawls pinned over their heads came to town with their baskets on their arm, some of them dragging a cow at the end of a

rope and beating it over the back with a switch to hasten its pace. Sometimes an old farmer and his wife would drive into town in a two-wheeled cart filled with poultry, eggs, vegetables, or fruit. In an effort to secure some of these fresh things, we nailed to the mess-hall door a large box with a slit in the top labelled 'Clackers for vegetables' (a clacker is the army term for a ten-centime piece, worth about two cents). Whether nobody ever inserted a clacker in the slit, or whether the mess sergeants ran away with the contents, no one will ever know. We do know, however, that we received no additional fresh vegetables.

Shortly after our arrival a canteen was opened, where we could buy American crackers and all kinds of canned goods at government prices. At noon and night the fellows played football in the courtyard, till it came to look like a college campus. In the 'salle de recreation' entertainments were numerous, and Madame So-and-So of the Paris opera appeared with laudable frequency. Much was done for our entertainment in Chaumont. Best of all, a Y. M. C. A. building was opened on Thanksgiving Day, with a Thanksgiving dinner nearly as good as we would have had at home. There was turkey, cranberry sauce, and all the 'fixins,' with doughnuts, coffee and

nuts. At the end—and most wonderful of all, as it seemed to us in that far-off little French village—in the afternoon a football game was played by the same teams we were accustomed to watch on Thanksgiving morning in the Harvard stadium!

Another favorite resort was the Café de la Paix, a low-lying building on the road from headquarters to the hospital, the retreat of the poilu and of the American chauffeur. As there were upwards of three hundred officers in town, most of whom had a car, it is easy to estimate how many chauffeurs there were and how large a garage was necessary. Two captains who ate here regularly were the pride of 'Monsieur,' a fat man with an immortal smile and an air of contentment, who spread for these gentlemen the otherwise bare table with a linen cover and his brightest silverware. Indeed, we soldiers admired the two captains hardly less than he did, because they deigned to eat in the room with common soldiers, though of course we knew it was because the food was almost better than it was at the hotel and was had at half the price. Never in my life have I eaten such delicious French fried potatoes, and if you told monsieur that you wanted a

chicken for Sunday he would get it and cook it deliciously for you.

One day I found in this democratic café a relative of the donor of our college library—an enlisted man serving as interpreter at the hospital—eating and talking intently with a grizzled poilu; for 'over there' the high and lowly meet on common grounds and discuss their common experiences. One of our coterie, the son of a millionaire railroad director and a graduate of a large American university, was a sergeant chauffeur for one of the generals, and took orders from a garage captain who used to be the family chauffeur and who obtained his commission on the recommendation and through the aid of the sergeant's father. Not for generations after this war, let us hope, will anyone dare to think it is a man's connections or his wealth that make him a man.

We had finished dinner here one evening and one of the chauffeurs was taking us home in his car. The town seemed deserted, though it was not eight o'clock; the streets were inky black. Just as we drew up at the barracks one of the scrubwomen came tearing out. "What's the matter?" I called. "Taubes!" she gasped in a trembling voice, pointing skyward but without

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slackening her speed; while behind her streamed her fellow-workwomen, all scurrying home as if they were frightened to death. From groups of men standing in the courtyard gazing into the heavens we learned that a telephone message had been received from the front to the effect that German planes had been seen to cross the lines and were moving in the direction of the American headquarters. Bar-le-Duc, but a few miles away, had been shelled the Sunday before and two hundred persons had been killed. It is impossible to describe the utter helplessness one experiences at such a time, not knowing when a bomb from the sky may blow him into eternity. The people who gaze nonchalantly at the illuminated signs in Times Square do not appreciate those commonplace objects. They do not know how much they have to be thankful for, though probably a large percentage of them would tell you with a certain degree of truthfulness that they thing an air raid must be 'wonderful' and that they would give anything to experience one.

We all kept a horrible vigil till midnight, for we knew that we had very little protection. It was interesting to note the scare on the different men. One said, "I don't care if they blow up the whole place"; and he acted as if he didn't

care, cursing because there was no light. Another was silent. Another was frightened almost to tears. Another would joke and make himself ridiculous to cheer the faint-hearted. There are no atheists at a time like this. We watched and waited, but nothing happened.

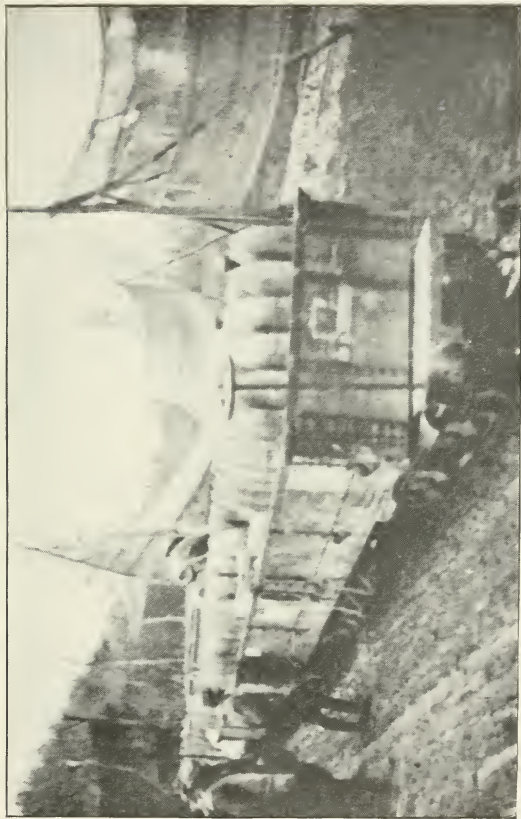
But though we were not very well prepared for air raids we were learning in daily gas-mask drills, to protect ourselves against poisonous gas. The American gas-mask looks like a chest-protector. It is filled with acid to counteract the gas. Connected with the headpiece, which fits tightly over the head, about the face, and under the chin, there is a tube resembling in appearance that of a diver's costume. The mask must be adjusted in six seconds.

Whether in Chaumont or Paris or at the front, the greatest joy in the soldier's life is the arrival of the mail with letters from home; and next to letters, magazines and newspapers are hailed with delight and, though a month or more old, are read with an eagerness that would amply reward those who were thoughtful enough to send them. A soldier would rather face a Boche than a mail pouch which contains nothing for him.

Although Thanksgiving found our quarters no larger, it did find our work increased tremendous-

ly. For one thing, it had become necessary to start a motor-registration branch in Paris, and I was overwhelmed with happiness when Colonel Pope called me into his office one day and told me I had been chosen to go there. I loved Chaumont and its people, and especially my new friends there; but here was an opportunity for development, as well as a means of returning to the splendors and wonders of the metropolis. Eagerly glad to go back, I divided the following day between arranging details in regard to the new work, packing up, and taking leave of my friends. From the warm-hearted French, who are so glad when you come and so sad when you go, the American soldier does not turn away without reluctance.

On the seventh day of December, at five o'clock in the evening, I was at the railroad station in Chaumont, with my trunks weighed and checked and my 'billet militaire' stamped with ten thousand different stamps, ready to entrain for Paris. Observing an American civilian on the platform, I walked up to him and ventured that it seemed rather too cold to be traveling for pleasure; whereupon he informed me that he was a Congressman from one of our eastern states, a member of a commission then in France, that he



A CAMOUFLAGED TRAINLOAD OF SHELLS

had lunched with General Pershing that noon and was now on his way to Paris en route for home.

Hospital trains from the front rumbled past in one direction, while in the other went a stream of freight cars, each of them jammed to overflowing with forty men and their equipment piled in like cattle; then there would be flat cars loaded with guns, barbed wire, wood, and steel—a ceaseless procession. At length my train, two hours late, pulled into the station. Old women with baskets and blue bundles, young women with children and soldiers, made a rush for the compartments. One American soldier whom I chanced to meet told me he had ridden miles on French railroads and had happened to ride in the same car every time; he knew this because he had noted that it was the same number, one hundred and eleven. The Roman numeral three on the door signifies third class!

I managed to squeeze into a compartment with four poilus and a colored colonial, who straightaway began to make remarks about my hat, my uniform, and my general appearance. For a while I kept a straight face in placid silence, but the effort was so great that I ended by joining in the conversation. They were a kind-hearted

lot and profusely apologized for having talked about me, naively excusing themselves on the ground that they did not think I would understand them. To reassure further that they were not intentionally impolite, they offered me bread from a dingy newspaper and 'pinard' from their canteens. I refused the wine and ate the bread reluctantly, not wishing to hurt their feelings, as I certainly should have done had I refused both. At midnight we were nearing Paris and, tired as I was, my heart was beating with joy.

CHAPTER VIII.

PARIS AGAIN AFTER FOUR MONTHS.

PARIS was a curtain of mist. I dragged my two trunks out of the station into the street and looked for a taxi, but the chilly hours of the early morning had evidently driven them all into hiding. It was one of those days that give us the blues, tighten the heart, and kill in us all energy and force. The heavy mist was as wet as rain and as cold as frost.

After waiting, impatiently enough, for half an hour or so, I descried sagging along up the street a black, raw-boned horse drawing a sea-going hack, as the taxi-carriages are called; it was one of those ancient nocturnal coupés which are seen in Paris chiefly after nightfall, as if they were ashamed to show their shabbiness during the day. A Frenchman saw it also, and we reached it at the same time. An argument followed, but as we happened to be going the same way we went along together amicably as far as the Meurice, where a little later I was persuading the bell-hop to bring me something to eat.

Upon arrival in Paris every American must register at the office of the provost marshal with-

in twelve hours. This done, I reported to my colonel, one of the best men I ever knew and a friend whom I regretted leaving more than anyone else in France. Since I was in Paris before, our government's preparations had increased to such an extent that another hotel of offices had been acquired, the Hotel Méditerranée, near the Bastille. In this building was my new office, a room still redolent of the boudoir, with light pink embossed wall-paper, a wash-stand, and near the door a notice in French instructing one to ring once for the bellboy, twice for the chambermaid, and three times for the waiter. Desks, filing cabinets, a French stenographer, and two clerks were promptly installed and everything was once more ready for business.

When a great nation moves into a foreign country for a season there are always many incidentals to be adjusted before the wheels can run smoothly. For one thing there had been a deal of trouble about motor-cars in the city. High American officers would apply for cars and nobody would dare refuse them, because nobody seemed to be invested with the necessary responsibility. A transport of cars would arrive at a seaport town, an officer would hear of it, come down at daybreak, take his choice, and drive away with

the car before it had even been checked or registered. Of course this would not do; for we had so few cars that, even after borrowing all we could from the French, one of our generals was compelled to use a Ford while Colonel House and his commission was in the city! A system was finally devised, therefore, by which no car would be supplied with government gasoline unless it bore a registration number, a rule which so effectually put an end to the 'take as you please' method that we soon had a record of every car.

Then, besides, a great many explanations are always necessary. On the second day of October, for instance, an order was issued in America and printed the following day in the Paris edition of the Chicago Tribune, to the effect that soldiers in the American army would not be permitted to wear the Croix de Guerre presented by the French for bravery without special authorization by Congress. I happened to be dining several days later with an old American Ambulance man who had been cited, when a lieutenant, spotting the war cross, came over to where we were seated and ordered my friend to remove the decoration. A French officer at the table beside us who had witnessed the affair naturally inquired why my companion had been ordered to take off the cita-

tion, but even after we explained the Frenchman remained perplexed. I do not know whether he considered the order an insult to the French government, but his face showed disapproval.

To the fathers and mothers and sweethearts who have never been "over there" it may seem from this recital of mine that their boys, far from being dangerously overworked, are having a pretty good time of it in France. If they do at times have too much recreation, however, it is the lesser of two evils; for it is infinitely worse to let the mind, unoccupied, either turn back homeward with longings that cannot be satisfied, or look ahead into what the near future may bring with it. In the daytime, if one has any leisure, there is always something interesting to see. Every noon after lunch I used to walk down the quais from the Bastille to the Ile de la Cité. Notre Dame cathedral charmed me at all times, but especially in the moonlight, which spread itself in a silvery glory over the whole square in front and made the rose windows look like a great spider-web sparkling with fairy dew. One afternoon I went in, and, meeting the 'maitre de chapelle' a kindly man with a grizzly black beard, I told him of the spell the building worked on me; whereupon he led me down a few stairs, through

a small door, and into the inner court. As I looked straight up, the mass of Gothic arches and sculpture and spires fairly overwhelmed me. Never have I seen such architectural glory. My Virgil led me on to increasing wonders, enumerating as we walked along, the world-famous architects and artists he had conducted over the sacred ground. At length we came to the rear of the church, where there lay, as if in ruins from an air raid, great pieces of sculptured stone and waterspouts with their gargoyle heads, any of which, my friendly guide assured me, I might take back to America as a souvenir of Notre Dame de Paris. As the gargoyles were too heavy, I selected a sculptured brace, which thenceforth I guarded jealously in my bag and which was the cause of a muttered curse from every 'facteur' and porter who lifted it.

I have said that when I arrived at Paris in the summer I found it greatly subdued, though quick to respond to the cheer of the American support. On my return to it now, after four months, a great change was everywhere salient. The people had seen that our men and supplies far exceeded their greatest hopes, and there was great rejoicing. Everywhere it was evident that the seeds of gaiety, buried for three years under the

snows of war, were springing up again. Although there had been only a half-dozen theatres open in the summer, there were now hardly as many closed. Gaby Deslys and Harry Pilser were playing at the Casino in 'Laissez-le-tomber.' Needless to say, this was the mecca of Americans. Here we spent both Christmas eve and New Year's. A real Jazz band delighted the soldiers and bewildered the English and French, who sat agape, unaccustomed to the jumbled slam-bang of American ragtime. The two performers so well known in the States were supported by the belles of Paris, the splendor of whose costumes offered a point for discussion in the columns of several Paris dailies as being out of order in a country which was bearing the brunt of war; but to the audience the combination of French beauty and American stagecraft simply furnished the means of spending a very enjoyable evening. During intermission the band performed on a balcony above tables at which sat soldiers and women singing and drinking. It was a motley throng—English officers and two or three women at one table, a group of Canadian soldiers at another, a Field Service man and a Red Cross nurse at another, and here and there a Kiltie and an Anzac. There were Sengalese as black as ink in the blue

French uniform and red hat, and swarthy officers of the English colonials from India with black curly beards and khaki turbans. As the performance was almost entirely in English, the Englishman would feel quite at home there, and the American could close his eyes and imagine himself at the New Amsterdam Theatre or the Hippodrome.

Neither English nor Americans, however, were prepared for the outbreak of the *Midinettes*, or bachelor maids, on Saint Catherine's Day. These are the sewing girls and dressmakers' models, and Saint Catherine is their patron saint. On that gala day the city belonged to them and the gendarmes knew it was useless to make any protest. Everywhere they had their way. Bands of gaily dressed young women and girls romped the streets, wearing a kind of boudoir cap with yellow strings and streamers. Four to ten abreast, they would sweep aside anything in their path. They had not celebrated for three years, but they saw better days ahead and were making up for lost time. Out of their shops on the Rue de la Paix and up the broad boulevards they dashed, assembling in the Place de l'Opéra. At first the outbreak rather stunned the soldiers of the allied armies, but only at first; ever ready for a good

time, it did not take long to get into the spirit of the thing and hasten to exchange their army hats for boudoir caps. I lost mine in the scramble, but I had a boudoir cap with yellow streamers instead! Youth, joy, and abandon were the watchwords of the day, and though there was ribaldry in song, speech, and action, all were happy for the time—and it was Paris!

One afternoon a group of English soldiers, followed by the straggling remains of the old Foreign Legion, that fascinating, romantic regiment of dare-devil desperadoes capable of all iniquities and all heroisms, marched through the streets singing the inevitable 'Tipperary.' In the Place de l'Opéra they stopped and sang the Marseillaise. The square was thronged. Old men sang, hats in hand and looks of reverence in their faces; young boys sang and waved their caps with eager countenances which showed that they had already heard their country's call and were waiting impatiently to answer it; women sang, with looks and tones that might bend the heads and wring the hearts of the world.

Christmas in Paris was wonderful. The articles displayed in the shop-windows in the Rue de la Paix equalled and often excelled those in any Fifth Avenue establishment. I don't know

who bought them; for myself I could only gaze at them and wish that I had thousands of francs to spend. Nothing seemed to be unobtainable if one had the price, which was always very high. I remember altogether too distinctly paying twenty-five dollars for a pair of quite ordinary shoes, and the equivalent of nine dollars for a suit of underwear, which I doubt was even half wool.

When I reached Paris tobacco could be purchased only on certain days, when of course long lines formed in front of the stores. As the tobacco crisis became more acute, signs of 'plus de tabac' were put in the windows, and, so far as the civilian population was concerned, "smokes" could be had only by favor. If one was to keep well supplied, one had to be the protégé of a merchant or of a deputy, or, better still, the deputy himself. The French soldier received a meagre weekly ration of the meanest grade, while the American soldier always had his accustomed cigarettes. It was a not uncommon sight to see him stop a poilu and offer him his package in return for a 'light'; which the latter always had in the shape of a briquet—a contrivance of flint and steel, a wick, and gasoline, made by the French from pieces of shell and often a work of

art. For myself, I always bought tobacco when I had an opportunity and, since I smoke very little, consequently kept a surplus on hand which I either gave to the boys or presented to my landlady for her soldier son—a lieutenant in the French army telephone service—or for herself, I never knew which. Be that as it may, she was always more pleased with a package of Fatimas than she would have been with a Louis d'or, and she showed her appreciation by giving me three lumps of sugar in my morning chocolate and a broader smile whenever we met.

Coal in Paris was forty-five dollars a ton, even if it could be obtained at any price. Since Madame Bonnard had none at all, and consequently no heat, I moved over to the American University Union, where a steam-heated room could be retained for five francs a day. This remarkable institution is in reality a club for the students or graduates of any American college or university of national repute. Situated in the Place du Palais Royale, in the Palais Royale Hotel, it has all the facilities of a modern hotel and clubhouse, where you could read, write, chat, sing, or loiter as you pleased, and above all where you had the best chance of meeting old friends. Nearly two hundred of us spent New Year's eve

there; at long tables laden with food and drink we watched the birth of 1918. Next morning at breakfast, much to my surprise, the half-dozen or more waitresses lined up and kissed every man in the dining-room! An old colonel who sat near us was rather more perturbed by the ordeal than we were, and seemed rather glad that such an amazing custom had not found its way to America. Perhaps it will in time; for this is only one of the French manners, so different from our own, that our boys are learning and are likely to bring home with them.

Perhaps, on the other hand, they will leave some of their own American "enterprise" behind them. They certainly lost no time in showing it over there; for as early as February 8 the first edition of the 'Stars and Stripes,' the official newspaper of the American Expeditionary Force, appeared in Paris. On the front page was the picture of General Pershing, followed by an appreciative letter from him:

In this initial number of the *Stars and Stripes*, published by the men of the overseas command, the Commander-in-chief of the American Expeditionary Forces extends his greetings through the editing staff to the readers from the first line trenches to the base ports.

These readers are mainly men who have been honored by being the first contingent of Americans to fight on European soil for the honor of their country. It is an honor and a privilege which make them fortunate above the millions of their fellow-citizens at home. Commensurate with their privilege of being here is the duty which is laid before them and this duty will be performed by them as by Americans of the past, eager, determined and unyielding to the last.

This paper, written by the men in the service, should speak the thoughts of the new American Army and the American people from whom the army has been drawn. It is your paper. Good luck to it.

(Signed) John J. Pershing.

But the University Union was not the only place provided for our comfort and recreation. On the Rue Royale there was an American Soldiers' and Sailors' Club for Americans and Canadians, with spacious reading and writing rooms and an entertainment of some kind twice a week. It was here at the Sunday afternoon tea served by American women, that I met Princess M——, an American who had married a Russian prince. She invited three or four of us to her home on a subsequent Sunday afternoon, where we had

tea and met two charming nieces, with whom we sang and danced. I also had the pleasure of attending a tea given by the Duchess of Tallyrand. Although such parties were greatly enjoyed by most of us, they savored somewhat of the patronizing spirit that pervades a Christmas party given for the children of an impoverished district of a large city.

In the daytime, as I have said, there is always plenty of work or of sight-seeing; it is in the evening that recreation and companionship are a sort of war necessity. Imagine, then, my delight one day at hearing the voice of one of my best friends from home speaking to me at the other end of the telephone. Would I see him tonight? Indeed I would. So we arranged a meeting-place and found our way to the Chinese Umbrella, familiar to every American in Paris. Opposite the Meurice on the Rue Mont Thabor, it is the eating place of all those who want corn bread, muffins and pies such as mother used to make. The proprietress, though she lived in China many years, has not forgotten what American dishes are, and she cooks them. True, a Frenchman and more often an Englishman, sometimes ventures inside; but he walks on tiptoe as one does who finds himself on restricted ground. And the

ground here is strictly American, as you will see if you pick up the guest-book and, after writing down your name and the town from which you hail, turn back and find on the earlier pages names telling you that many friends whom you did not know to be in France have preceded you in the discovery of this unique eating-place. That night we found sailors there whom we regarded with green-eyed, venomous envy when they told us that without a doubt they would eat their Christmas dinner at home. Not even could we be comforted by the Chinese Umbrella's famous ice cream with chocolate sauce, made of honey and served by attractive French lassies in costumes of the land in the Far East.

If we had not eaten at the Umbrella we might have gone to the 'Oasis' near the Madeleine, which on the other hand, is English and breathes more formality. The food there is perhaps a trifle better, and you receive a linen napkin instead of a paper one; but your waitress is a typical English house-maid, who, instead of smiling, asks if the gentleman will have this or that soup please, and, when informed, answers 'Thank you, sir.'

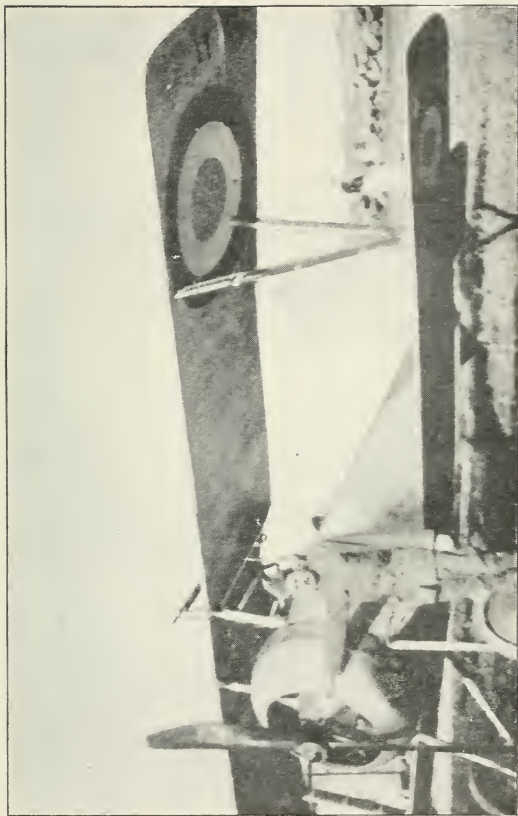
But the opera was our destination; tonight it was *Aida*, and we had a 'baignoir.' There were

operas three times a week, and for a few francs a seat in the orchestra could be obtained. As usual, we found Americans in abundance occupying the best places, the French and English filling the seats behind and in the balconies. I know that some of those men in the front places appreciated the music as much as did the poilu in the fourth balcony; but I wager that a large percentage were there who had never before heard an opera, were all the time wondering what the French could see in it, and were wishing that they were at the Folies-Bergère instead. They had simply come to be seen of their brethren, in the hope of getting credit for possessing musical intellects.

CHAPTER IX.

AN AIR RAID.

NOTWITHSTANDING her relief at seeing armies of welcome "Americans" flocking to help her, Paris still has her anxieties. On the night of January 30 I was at the Union writing a letter when, about half-past eleven, an attendant entered the room and requested every one to stop writing and go into the lobby in the interior of the building, as an order had been received from the police department to extinguish all lights. No sooner had the request been delivered than we were in darkness, but luckily one of the waiters had a flashlight and three or four candles were soon lighted. Several waitresses came running in from the dining-room with blanched faces, murmuring 'Sales Boches.' The fire-engine and ladder companies raced madly through the streets, blowing their sirens. By the time we got to the door to see what was happening the French air patrols were up dropping their green and red signals; for after warning of a raid is given by telephone from the front lines it requires from twenty minutes to half an hour for the squadron



A FRENCH PLANE AND AN AMERICAN DRIVER

of fifty or more Gothas to reach the capital. Just before midnight the anti-aircraft guns mounted on the Arch of Triumph, began to speak, and we heard plainly the rat-tat-tat of machine guns, making a sound like that of a steel-riveting machine. By this time we were in the middle of the street in the bright moonlight. A few seconds later a terrific explosion occurred; there was a flash, and by the glare of it we could see debris rising into the air; then another crash, and another, at intervals of four or five seconds; then more firing, and all was quiet again. Daylight showed that only a block away the roof and three upper stories of a very substantially built stone apartment house had been blown away and six persons killed. We could see the interior of the rooms, with part of the walls torn away and debris sliding down into the street, which was a mass of wreckage roped off by the police and surrounded by a crowd of the curious. On the next street a bomb had struck in the middle of the road, making an ugly hole, the buildings on either side being chipped by the flying pieces. Windows had been broken for several hundred yards in all directions, the glass littered the streets. The following day strips of paper might be seen pasted over a great many windows as a

means of protection against bomb concussion ; and several days later the authorities began to sand-bag the works of art. Scaffolding was erected on all sides of the Arch of Triumph, on the Vendôme Column, and in front of the Opera, where men worked rapidly filling bags with sand and putting them in place to hide the treasures of the city. After that raids came every few nights, the determined Gothas raining tons of bombs upon the capital. Every moonlight night there would be pro-and-con arguments as to whether the Boche was likely to pay us a visit that night or not, and nearly every day the city was shaken by shells. Yet with what a splendid spirit Paris has met these raids ! It is the same gay-hearted, laughing city, curious and excited over the bombardment, but not at all afraid. There is more curiosity than terror. Even the first shell fired in March from a tunnel just outside the little town of Crepy-en-Laon, seventy-five miles away, proved more of an enigma than a fright to Paris. Some persons guessed it was a bomb from an aeroplane flying so high as to be undiscovered ; some said it was the work of spies in or near the city ; others claimed it was a gun and not a bomb ; and when the ' canon colossal ' became known and upwards of a million of people left the city, it was

for every conceivable reason but that they were afraid. Many of those who went were American social parasites who should never have been there at all, people who made a very poor impression on the French and were a disgrace to the many American war workers in Paris. This exodus has, of course, made the problem of feeding the civilian population much easier, and has relieved the authorities from the necessity of evacuating the city, which had been contemplated.

In these raids the enemy's planes come over the lines in droves and, penetrating the outer defenses, are met by the barrage of the Paris guns. They fly high, shutting off their motors to avoid making any noise, let their bombs drop anywhere, and dash for home. Even as I write men are at work on the banks of the Seine trying out a new smoke screen for use on moonlight nights; also a system of wire entanglements lifted into the air by balloons is in process of being perfected. For these attacks on the capital mean even more than war to the Parisian: he feels that his sacred precincts have been violated. One has only to know the French to realize how intense this feeling is. The Boche understands it well, and, knowing also that the Provençal loves his beautiful Paris no less than the Parisian himself does, even though

he may never have seen it, he thinks by his raids to destroy the entire morale of the country. But instead of accomplishing his purpose he only intensifies the feeling of hatred against himself. Provençal and Parisian alike will die for Paris, but they will not be frightened.

For protection against the bombs there are thousands of well-built stone houses and other shelters all over the city. You cannot walk a hundred yards in any section of Paris without seeing a sign, "Abri—20 personnes," denoting a refuge for twenty people, or whatever the number might be. Here the timid may go and wait till the danger is over; but most persons, especially the Americans, prefer to remain in the streets and enjoy the spectacle. The bursting shrapnel, the rockets, the red and green lights on the aeroplanes, and the sound of motors and machine-gun fire are too exciting to miss, even at the risk of one's life. The Parisian, however, is growing continually more careful—and more fearless.

But there are other terrors than from the air: there are frightful wounds, there is disease and pain and weariness and discouragement. From the day when I was sent to the American Red Cross Military Hospital No. 2 with a bad cold I have known nothing but hospital walls, which are

too unpleasant to linger upon in retrospect. Enough to say that while I was there I saw so many poor fellows infinitely worse off than I was that I hope I shall never complain again. One ward contained only wounded Frenchmen, nearly all of them Verdun victims. I liked to go down evenings and talk with them. They were exceedingly industrious and were much cleverer with the needle than many women are, making exquisite bead chains and pillow covers as they lay in bed. One unfortunate had been lying there eighteen months with a broken hip.

One of the blessés whose acquaintance I made in the hospital was Noel Lazare, an artillery-man, who had received a minor leg wound but was able to get about with the aid of a cane: I have spent many pleasant hours in his company and have taken many trips about Paris with him. One sunny day we went to Versailles while the Allied Conference, at which our country was represented by Generals Pershing and Bliss, was in progress there. The Hotel Trianon, in which the meetings were held, was a favorite retreat for Parisians in peace times, when they used to motor out for afternoon tea. The palace of the Louis is still there, and so are the gardens and the Trianons and the stable with the golden carriages

of another time; but the little town is deserted by the tourist. The palace is supposed to be closed, but the day we were there an old man in the courtyard, once the guide but now only a dreamer of the days of prosperity gone by, said he thought it would be possible to gain entrance. Three British officers with jaunty swagger-sticks happening to come up just then, we made up a party and were admitted to the cold bare rooms. But what mattered it to us whether Marie Antoinette came through this door or that when the mob attacked the palace? we were hearing the whir of aeroplane motors outside. Of course we were glad to know that the picture that was here or the statue that was there had been taken west and hidden for protection, but the vital things to us were the hundreds of French camion trucks at the station. For was not Versailles one of the large centers of supply for the French army?

A great many of the charming old French villas have been appropriated to hospital uses. One American millionaire at Chantilly has given over his beautiful estate to the comfort of American Ambulance men who need a place in which to recuperate after leaving the hospital. These men, a dozen at a time, go there for ten days to live with the family, whose kindness and hospitality

may be judged from the following letter from a friend I met at the hospital in Paris who later went to Chantilly :

"I find I am not going to regret my ten days here after all. The first day has been wonderful. The eats are too marvellous for description, and we have the freedom of their beautiful and spacious villa. This afternoon we played golf on the famous Chantilly course, which is reputed to be one of the best in Europe. I hope you are well and are getting at least as good hash as when I left. If you could only see the spread we have all the time—chicken tonight!" A letter like this received when one is confined to a hospital and obliged to subsist for the most part on the above-mentioned hash, is enough to call up the sprites of envy, or make you follow the example of the two little French maids, one or the other of whom would bring your tray of hash—I shall never forget them, Simone and Leontine, both with husbands at the front—who would curse the doctors and nurses continually and from whom I learned enough French slang and bad language to last a lifetime.

For her women, indeed, Parish may well blush. The numbers of almost irresistibly attractive women of the street who will accost you at every

turn is amazing. I counted seventeen who spoke to me inside of half an hour. I remember distinctly one frail bit of humanity, scarcely more than a child but extremely chic in her silk and finery, who withered me completely with an outburst of profanity and shocking language in which I could see mirrored an American soldier who had taught her some English. Women have greater power than they exert with their knitting-needles: they can move armies. The women of Paris moved from the city all of the American Army which was not absolutely necessary there, and it was they who made necessary the order prohibiting a soldier from spending his furlough in the capital. Those of us who remained there jokingly referred to this great exodus as the first battle of the war which the Americans had lost decisively—the battle of Paris!

And yet, though Paris keeps all the old sins in a new shape and revels in them, still the glittering, tawdry effects of her unspeakable hell do not blister one's soul as they did before the war. Four desperate years have worked many changes. The chanteuses in the open-air cafés of the Champs Elysées are no more, and the women who lounge about in the cafés are somehow different; the satyrs are hoofless and tailless. The

woman who makes to her priest a confession of sins with the full delight of them written upon her face and with the avowed intention, in every grin of her rouged lips and every flash of her painted eyes, of committing them all over again, proves that she is in danger of being swept into eternity in the very midst of her confession, as were the two hundred on Good Friday in the famous twelfth-century church of Saint Gervais, when it was struck by a shell from the long-distance German gun. Even the most corrupt are being taught by this searching war that ideals are worth while.

CHAPTER X.

AMERICA AWAKE.

"There is some soul of goodness in things evil,
Would men observingly distil it out."

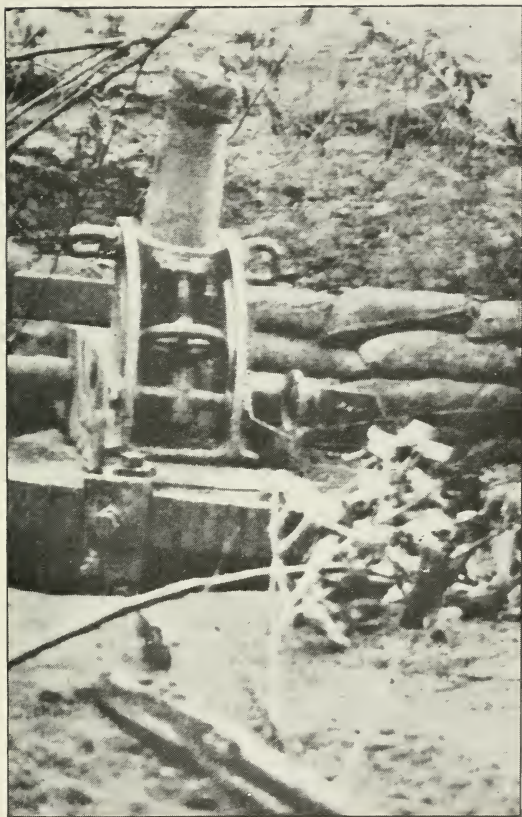
EVEN war has its advantages. When I left home the United States was slumbering in the lap of luxury, even as Rome was just before her downfall; she had not awakened to the full realization of her obligation to humanity. In our first days in France we were amused to read in newspapers from home that the American people were suffering because they could obtain only a small amount of sugar or coal—when the French had for months had almost none of either! Or that a well-known millionaire had decided to aid in conservation by sacrificing his private car and would use the conventional pullman—when over there we were riding in the never-to-be-forgotten 'Chevaux 8—Hommes 40' freight cars!

Since I came back to America I have noticed an immense change in the spirit of the country. Whereas a year ago there was lassitude and lack of interest in winning the war, today America is aroused as if by magic, and the intensity of every one in the service and in civil life is, generally speaking, all that could be desired. As the war continues and casualty lists containing the

names of sons, husbands, fathers, and brothers grow to larger proportions, as they inevitably will, our interest will increase and we shall be all the more determined to fight to the end. Not only the pacifists, but the general public used to think that, since they had nothing against Germany personally, they ought not to be drawn into the war when they were living peaceful lives and were perfectly satisfied with things as they were. For this feeling there was at first some excuse, since the war was too far away to be real to us; but, now that our loved ones are being killed and maimed, it is our own war. We have leaped to our places behind the cannons and there we will stay. There is no more sighing about sugar and coal and motors and such things. What we are sighing for now is permission to go over and help, or, failing that, we are ready to put a shoulder to the wheel at home wherever it will do the most good. In these greatest days in the history of the world every man, woman, and child, with red blood in his veins wants to do something. I have received countless letters from young, and several letters from older, women signifying their desire to come over seas and lend a hand somewhere. The earnestness with which they write, insisting that they are not prompted by silly or romantic

reasons, impresses me and makes me all the prouder yet to be an American. These letters usually ask for information concerning the need of women in clerical positions or in the canteen service.

For the soldier the Spartan discipline of the army, the right kind of food and regular hours, far from the lure of the cabaret, is doing wonders from a physical point of view—I have yet to find one who has not gained in weight and in carriage since entering the army; and, better still, many a boy is learning for the first time in his life the blessed necessity of obeying somebody. Educationally, too, this great opportunity to see the world is the chance of a lifetime not only to the farmer's son from the west and to the backwoodsman, but to 999 out of every 1,000 of us. The necessity of being larger men and women is being literally thrust upon us. But, asks some one, does not army life develop a lack of initiative and loss of individuality, since it is the duty of a good soldier not to reason why, but to do only what he is told to do? Never for a man worth while! If in a worthy cause he does become simply a soldier and loses his identity as Mr. Smith, lover of horses, or as Tony, the organ-grinder, he will come home more of a man, with broader interests and ambitions.



AN EFFECTIVE HUN-DESTROYER

And far greater things are coming to pass, things that are beginning to grip the hearts of great nations themselves. For more than a century our country has cherished a grateful regard for the French people far beyond that felt for any other nation in the world; and today, as the young manhood and young womanhood of the two republics stand shoulder to shoulder fighting the common enemy of the ideals and principles which they both represent, their sisterhood is fast being cemented into firmer and firmer bonds. Into the hearts of these two peoples there has come, in the course of this terrible world war, a newer and fuller realization of the meaning and value of the principles that have guided them in their self-determined course; a truer comprehension of the potentiality of their position in the world, and a higher estimate of their mission in the service of mankind. As for the admiration which we Americans feel for the fidelity and fortitude, the courage and gallantry, with which the French people have stood by these twin heritages and grandly upheld the traditions common to both nations, no words of praise are sufficient. Beneath the light exterior of French volatility we have come to see a deep-seated reverence and a solid sense of responsibility, a solemn veneration for

their national institutions, and an enduring and unsurpassed love of country and of mankind that have endeared them immeasurably to the people of this country. In the new relations between these twin republics the world is being shown that, when founded on the solid basis of truth, justice, and liberty, the bonds of international friendship are more than passing exchanges of compliment and their mutual obligations more than scraps of paper.

In this great war France has displayed not only every trait that was to be expected of a great free people, but something more. The coolness and courage with which the whole population has faced the repeated menaces of their national existence, the fortitude with which they have endured their terrible scourgings, the determination and brilliancy with which they have resisted overwhelming odds, and, above all, the modesty and chivalry with which they have borne out the traditions of French gallantry in war, have given to the world and especially to America an inspiring example of what a truly great, free people may be and do. The French people are now assured that the hearts of the American people go out to them in the fulness of sympathy for their suffering and sacrifices, of gratitude for their

heroic services, and of admiration for their dauntless spirit. If the mere mutual esteem of the two nations has formed a bond that has endured for a century and a half, it is certain that the close intimacy of their comradeship in arms today will result in a knowledge and appreciation of each other that will bind them in a sisterhood far outlasting the tenure of their faithful friendship of the past.

On the other hand, in payment for the sacrifices France has made and the hardships she has endured for us, we are without a doubt rebuilding her country, and this rebuilding will not cease with the end of the war. A year ago Saint Nazaire was a small seaport town; since the advent of American engineers and American material it has become a modern city of steel, a centre of railroad termini, dry docks, and storehouses. Not here alone, but throughout France, the inhabitants, open-mouthed, have watched with amazement our miracles of construction. Many of our soldiers have married in France, and countless others have told me of their intention to remain there or to return after the war to help rebuild the nation.

And what of England? If I have in this book said nothing about our English brothers in blood

and in arms, it is because the Americans have come into contact with them very little thus far. I am of pure English descent and am proud of it. Can one say more of England than that without her aid this war would have been over long ago with the Kaiser triumphantly supreme?

When will the war end and when will the boys come home? This has been the one question shot at me from all sides since my return? Who can tell? It is difficult even to speculate since so many things may happen to shorten or prolong the struggle. Inventions are but one of a thousand possibilities to determine the length of it. The French say five years; the Americans over there say at least three years; the Canadian will tell you, in a manner which signifies he means what he says, that the Daschund has a lot of kick in her yet; all say that the war will probably last a long time yet. At any rate, the boys will not come home until the war *does* end, and how far away that time is will depend very considerably upon the determination of every individual in these United States to do more than his or her bit and to do it immediately. When the glad time does come, as it eventually must, France, with the aid of America, will rise from her ashes greater, stronger, and more beautiful than ever.

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